



THIS BOOK
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For Mrs. Frost,

In Memoriam,

Oct 28th 1876.

Sacred Dramas,

Anne Backe

CHIEFLY INTENDED FOR

YOUNG PERSONS:

THE SUBJECTS TAKEN FROM THE BIBLE.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

REFLECTIONS OF KING HEZEKIAH;

SENSIBILITY, A POEM;

AND

SEARCH AFTER HAPPINESS.

By HANNAH MORE.

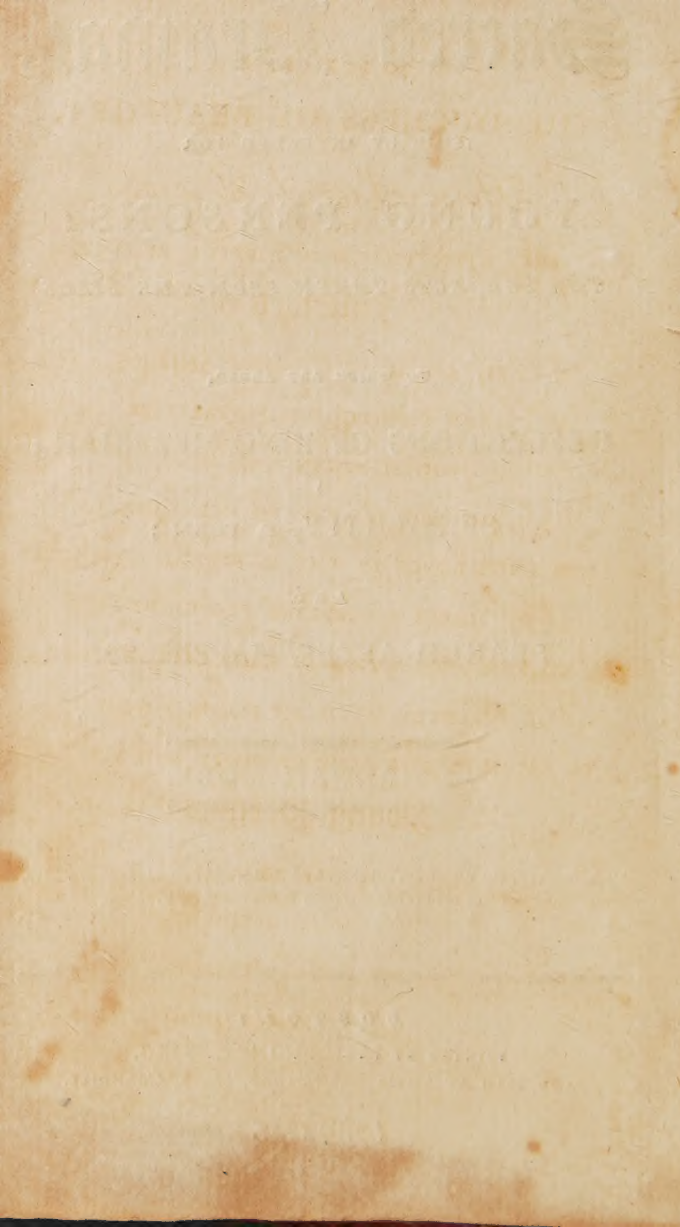
All the Books of the BIBLE are either most admirable and exalted Pieces of Poetry,
or are the best materials in the world for it.

COWLEY.

B O S T O N :

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AND SOLD AT THEIR BOOK-STORE, No. 2, CORNHILL.

April, 1801.



TO HER GRACE
THE DUCHESS OF BEAUFORT,

These Sacred Dramas

ARE, WITH THE MOST PERFECT RESPECT,

Inscribed :

AS, AMONG THE MANY AMIABLE

AND DISTINGUISHED QUALITIES

WHICH ADORN HER MIND,

AND ADD LUSTRE TO HER RANK,

HER EXCELLENCE IN THE MATERNAL CHARACTER

GIVES A PECULIAR PROPRIETY

TO HER PROTECTION OF THIS LITTLE WORK ;

WRITTEN WITH AN HUMBLE WISH

TO PROMOTE THE LOVE OF PIETY AND VIRTUE IN

Young Persons :

BY HER GRACE'S

MOST OBEDIENT,

MOST OBLIGED, AND

MOST HUMBLE SERVANT,

H. MORE.



ADVERTISING



ADVERTISEMENT.

I AM as ready as the most rigid Critic, to confess, that nothing can be more simple and inartificial than the plans of the following Dramas. In the construction of them, I have seldom ventured to introduce any persons* of my own creation : still less did I imagine myself at liberty to invent circumstances. I reflected, with awe, *that the place whereon I stood was holy ground.* All the latitude I permitted myself, was, to make such persons as I selected, act under such circumstances as I found, and express such sentiments as, in my humble judgment, appeared not unnatural to their situations. Some of the speeches are so long as to retard the action ; for I rather aspired after Moral Instruction, than the purity of Dramatic Composition. The very terms of Act and Scene are avoided ; because I was unwilling to awaken the attention of the Reader to my deficiencies in critical exactness.

It will be thought that I have chosen, perhaps, the least important passage in the eventful Life of David, for the foundation of the Drama which bears his name. Yet even in this, his first exploit, the sacred Historian represents him as exhibiting no mean lesson of modesty, humility, courage, and piety ; virtues not only admirable, but imitable, and within the reach of every Reader. Many will think, that the introduction of Saul's daughter would have added to the effect of the piece : and I have no doubt but that it would have made the intrigue more complicated, and more interesting, had this Drama been intended for the Stage. There, all that is tender, and all that is terrible in the passions, find a proper place. But I write for the Young, in whom it

* Never, indeed, except in DANIEL, and that of necessity ; as the Bible furnishes no more than two persons, Daniel and Darius ; and these were not sufficient to carry on the business of the Piece.

will be always time enough to have them awakened ; I write for a class of Readers, to whom it is not easy to accommodate one subject.*

A very judicious and learned friend has remarked, that the *Reflections of King Hezekiah* breathe rather too much of the spirit of Christianity ; for that it is scarcely probable, he had so settled a belief in the General Judgment. I feel the justness of the objection, without having been able to obviate it. I wished to convey a strong idea of this great leading truth ; and have, perhaps improperly, ascribed sentiments to a Jewish monarch, merely because I wished to impress them on the Christian Reader.

The Critic and the Scholar, if any such should honour these pages with their attention, will find ample matter on which to exercise their candour and charity ; qualities so natural to genius and to learning, that even the feebleness of my performance will not be able to obstruct the exertion of them in favour of my intention.

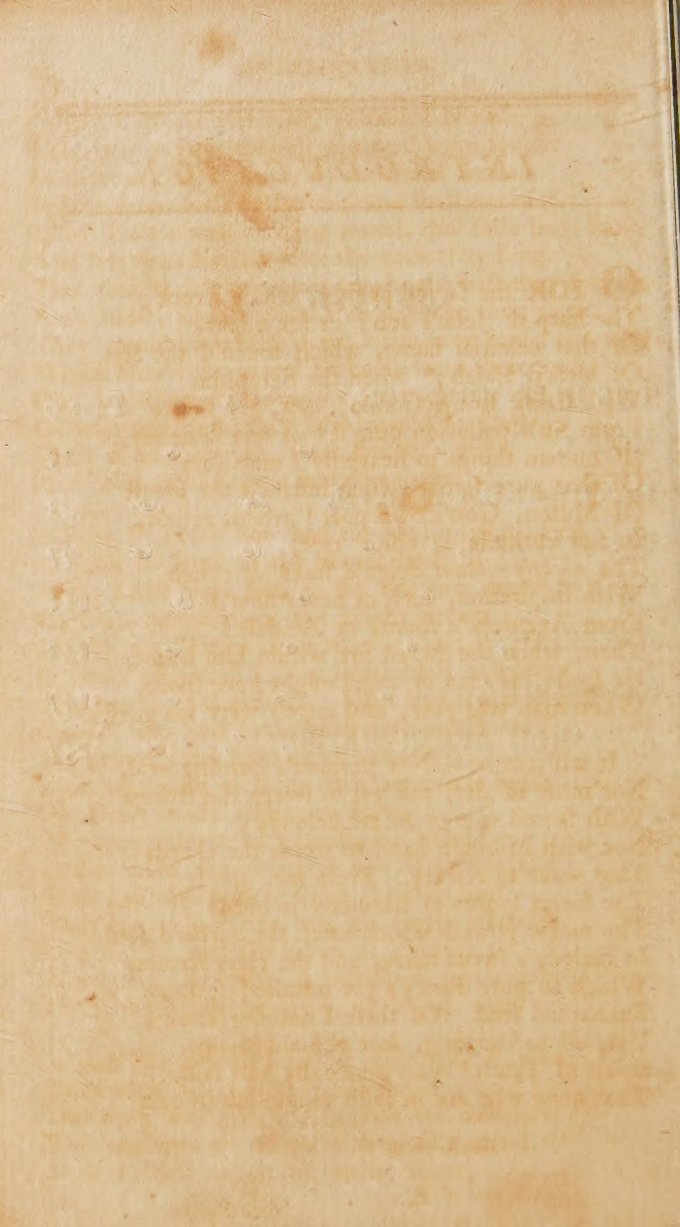
The amiable Poet,† from whom I have taken my motto, after shewing the superiority of the Sacred over the Profane Histories, (some instances of which I have noticed in my Introduction) concludes with the following remark, which I may apply to myself with more propriety than it was used by the Author : “ I am far
“ from assuming to myself, to have fulfilled the duty
“ of this weighty undertaking ; and I shall be ambitious
“ of no other fruit from this weak and imperfect attempt of mine, but the opening of a way to the courage and industry of some other persons, who may be
“ better able to perform it thoroughly and successfully.”

* It would not be easy, I believe, to introduce Sacred Tragedies on the English Stage. The scrupulous would think it profane, while the profane would think it dull. Yet the excellent RACINE, in a dissipated country, and a voluptuous court, ventured to adapt the story of *Athalie* to the French Theatre ; and it remains to us a glorious monument of its Author's courageous piety, and of the perfection of the Dramatic Art.

† Cowley.

Contents.

THE INTRODUCTION,	-	Page 9
MOSES,	-	15
DAVID AND GOLIATH,	-	33
BELSHAZZAR,	-	77
DANIEL,	-	111
HEZEKIAH,	-	142
SENSIBILITY,	-	147
A SEARCH AFTER HAPPINESS,	-	157



INTRODUCTION.

FOR the sacred energy, which struck
The harp of Jesse's son ! or for a spark
Of that celestial flame, which touch'd the lips
Of blest'd Isaiah ;* when the Seraphim
With living fire descended, and his soul
From sin's pollution purg'd ! or one faint ray,
(If human things to heavenly I may join)
Of that pure spirit, which inflam'd the breast
Of Milton, God's own poet ! when, retir'd,
In fair enthusiastic vision rapt,
The *nightly visitant* deign'd bless his couch
With inspiration, such as never flow'd
From Aganippe's fount, or Acidale !
Then, when the sacred fire within him burnt,
He spake, as man or angel might have spoke,
When man was pure, and angels were his guests.

It will not be.—Nor prophet's burning zeal,
Nor muse of fire, nor yet to sweep the strings
With sacred energy to me belongs ;
Nor with Miltonic hand to touch the chords
That wake to ecstacy. From me, alas !
The secret source of harmony is hid ;
The magic powers which catch the ravish'd soul
In melody's sweet maze, and the clear streams
Which to pure Fancy's yet untasted springs
Enchanted lead. Of these I nothing know ;
Yet, all unknowing, dare thy aid invoke,
Spirit of Truth ! who graciously hast said,
That none who ask in faith should ask in vain.

Isaiah, chap. vi.

You I invoke not now, ye fabled Nine !
 I not invoke you, though you well were fought
 In Greece and Latium, by immortal bards,
 Whose syren song enchants ; and shall enchant,
 'Thro' Time's wide-circling round, tho' false their faith,
 And less than human were the gods they sung.
 Tho' false their faith, they taught the best they knew ;
 And, blush, O Christians ! liv'd above their faith.
 They would have bless'd the beam, and hail'd the day,
 Which chas'd the moral darkness from their souls.
 Oh ! had their minds receiv'd the clearer ray
 Of true devotion, they had learn'd to scorn
 Their deities impure, their senseless gods,
 And wild mythology's fantastic maze.

Pure PLATO ! how had thy chaste spirit hail'd
 A faith so fitted to thy moral sense !
 What hadst thou felt, to see the fair romance
 Of high imagination, the bright dream
 Of thy pure fancy more than realiz'd !
 O sweet enthusiast ! thou hadst blest a scheme
 Fair, good, and perfect. How had thy rapt soul
 Caught fire, and burnt with a diviner flame !
 For ev'n thy fair idea ne'er conceiv'd
 Such plenitude of love, such boundless bliss,
 As Deity made visible to sense.
 Unhappy BRUTUS ! philosophic mind !
 Great 'midst the errors of the Stoic school !
 How had his kindling spirit joy'd to find
 That his lov'd virtue was no empty name :
 Nor had he met the vision at Philippi ;
 Nor had he sheath'd his bloody dagger's point,
 Or in the breast he lov'd, or in his own.

The Pagan page how far more wise than ours !
 They with the gods they worship'd grac'd their song ;
 Our song was grac'd with gods we disbelieve ;
 The manners we adopt without the creed.
 Shall Fiction only raise poetic flame,

And shall no altars blaze, O TRUTH ! to thee ?
 Shall Falsehood only please, and Fable charm ?
 And shall eternal Truth neglected lie ?
 Because immortal, slighted or profan'd ?
 Truth has our rev'rence only, not our love ;
 Our praise, but not our heart. A deity,
 Confess'd, but shunn'd ; acknowledg'd, not ador'd ;
 She comes too near us, and she shines too bright :
 Her penetrating beam at once betrays
 What we would hide from others and ourselves.

Why shun to make our duty our delight ?
 Let *pleasure* be the motive (and allow
 That immortality be quite forgot :)
 Where shall we trace, thro' all the page profane,
 A livelier pleasure, and a purer source
 Of innocent delight, than the fair book
 Of holy Truth presents ? For ardent youth,
 The sprightly narrative ; for years mature,
 The moral document, in sober robe
 Of grave philosophy array'd : which all
 Had heard with admiration, had embrac'd
 With rapture ; had the shades of Academe,
 Or the learned Porch produc'd it. Then, O then,
 How Wisdom's hidden treasures had been couch'd
 Beneath fair Allegory's graceful veil !

Do not the powers of soul-enchanting song,
 Strong imag'ry, bold figure, every charm
 Of eastern flight sublime, apt metaphor,
 And all the graces in thy lovely train,
 Divine Simplicity ! assemble all
 In Sion's songs, and bold Isaiah's strain ?

Why should the classic eye delight to trace
 How Pyrrha and the fam'd Thessalian king^m
 Restor'd the ruin'd race of lost mankind ;
 Yet turn, incurious, from the patriarch sav'd ;

The righteous remnant of a delug'd world ?
 Why are we taught, delighted, to recount
 Alcides' labours, yet neglect to learn
 How mighty Samson led a life of toil
 Herculean ? Pain and peril mark'd them both ;
 A life eventful, and disastrous death.
 Can all the tales, which Grecian records yield ;
 Can all the names the Roman page records,
 Renown'd for friendship and surpassing love ;
 Can gallant Theseus and his brave compeer ;
 Orestes, and the partner of his toils ;
 Achates and his friend ; Euryalus,
 And blooming Nisus, pleasant in their lives,
 And undivided by the stroke of death ;
 Can each, can all, a lovelier picture yield
 Of virtuous friendship : can they all present
 A tenderness more touching than the love
 Of Jonathan and David ?—Speak, ye young !
 You who are undebauch'd by fashion's lore,
 And, unsophisticate, from nature judge,
 Say, is your quick attention stronger drawn,
 By wasted Thebes, than Pharaoh's smitten hosts ?
 Or do the vagrant Trojans yield a theme
 More grateful to the eager appetite
 Of young impatience, than the wand'ring tribes,
 By Moses thro' the thirsty desert led ?
 'The beauteous Maid* (tho' tender is the tale)
 Whose guileless blood on Aulis' altar stream'd,
 Smites not the bosom with a softer pang
 Than Jephthah's daughter, doom'd like her to die.

Such are the lovely themes, which court the Muse,
 Scarce yet essay'd in verse. O let me mourn,
 'That heav'n-descended song should e'er forget
 Its sacred dignity, and high descent ;
 Should e'er so far its origin debase,
 To spread corruption's bane, to lull the bad
 With flattery's opiate strain ; to taint the heart

* Iphigenia.

Of innocence, and silently infuse
 Delicious poison, whose insidious charm
 Feeds the sick mind, and fondly ministers
 Unwholesome pleasure to the fever'd taste ;
 While its fell venom, with malignant pow'r,
 Strikes at the root of virtue, with'ring all
 Her vital energy. Oh ! for some balm
 Of sov'reign power, to raise the drooping Muse
 To all the health of virtue ! to infuse
 A gen'rous warmth, to rouse an holy pride,
 And give her high conceptions of herself !

For me, eternal Spirit ! let thy word
 My path illumine ! O thou compassionate GOD !
 Thou know'st our frame, thou know'st we are but dust.
 From dust a Seraph's zeal thou wilt not ask,
 An Angel's purity. Oh ! as I strive,
 Tho' with a feeble voice and flagging wing,
 A glowing heart, but pow'rless hand, to tell
 The faith of favour'd man to Heav'n, to sing
 The ways inscrutable of Heaven to man ;
 May I, by thy celestial guidance led,
 Fix deeper in my heart the truths I sing !
 In my own life transcribe whate'er of good.
 To others I propose ! and by thy rule
 Correct th' irregular,* reform the wrong.
 Exalt the low, and brighten the obscure !
 Still may I note, how all th' agreeing parts
 Of this well-order'd fabric join to frame
 One fair, one finish'd, one harmonious whole !
 Trace the close links, which form the perfect chain
 In beautiful connexion ; mark the scale,
 Whose nice gradations, with progression true,
 For ever rising, end in DEITY !

* What in me is dark
 Illumine, what is low raise and support.

PARADISE LOST.

Persons of the Drama.

HEBREW WOMEN.

JOCHEBED, Mother of MOSES.

MIRIAM, his Sister.

EGYPTIANS.

The PRINCESS, King PHARAOH's Daughter; MELITA;
and other Attendants.

SCENE on the Banks of the NILE.

☛ The Subject is taken from the Second Chapter of
the Book of Exodus.

Moses in the Bulrushes :

A

SACRED DRAMA.

PART I.

I will assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to man.

PARADISE LOST.

JOCHEBED, MIRIAM.

JOCHEBED.

WHY was my pray'r accepted? why did Heav'n.
In anger hear me, when I ask'd a son?
Ye dames of Egypt! happy, happy mothers!
No tyrant robs you of your fondest hopes;
You are not doom'd to see the babes you bore,
The babes you nurture, bleed before your eyes!
You taste the transports of maternal love,
And never know its anguish! happy mothers!
How diff'rent is the lot of thy sad daughters,
O wretched Israel! Was it then for this,
Was it for this the righteous arm of God.
Rescued his chosen people from the jaws
Of cruel want, by pious Joseph's care?
Joseph! th' elected instrument of Heav'n,
Decreed to save illustrious Abraham's race,
What time the famine rag'd in Canaan's land!
Israel, who then was spar'd, must perish now!

Oh thou mysterious Power ! who hast involv'd
Thy wise decrees in darkness, to perplex
The pride of human wisdom, to confound
The daring scrutiny, and prove the faith
Of thy presuming creatures ! clear this doubt ;
Teach me to trace this maze of Providence ;
Why save the fathers, if the sons must perish ?

MIRIAM.

Ah me, my mother ! whence these floods of grief ?

JOCHEBED.

My son ! my son ! I cannot speak the rest.
Ye who have sons can only know my fondness !
Ye who have lost them, or who fear to lose,
Can only know my pangs ! none else can guess them.
A mother's sorrows cannot be conceiv'd,
But by a mother—Wherefore am I one ?

MIRIAM.

With many pray'rs thou didst request this son,
And Heav'n has granted him.

JOCHEBED:

O sad estate
Of human wretchedness ! so weak is man,
So ignorant and blind, that did not God
Sometimes withhold in mercy what we ask,
We should be ruin'd at our own request.

Too well thou know'st, my child, the stern decree
Of Egypt's cruel king, hard-hearted Pharaoh ;
" That ev'ry male of Hebrew mother born,
" Must die." Oh ! do I live to tell it thee ?
Must die a bloody death ! My child, my son,
My youngest born, my darling must be slain !

MIRIAM.

The helpless innocent ! and must he die ?

JOCHEBED.

No : if a mother's tears, a mother's prayers,
 A mother's fond precautions can prevail,
 He shall not die. I have a thought, my Miriam !
 And sure the God of mercies, who inspir'd,
 Will bless the secret purpose of my soul,
 To save his precious life.

MIRIAM.

Hop'st thou that Pharaoh—

JOCHEBED.

I have no hope in Pharaoh, much in God ;
 Much in the ROCK OF AGES.

MIRIAM.

Think, O think,
 What perils thou already hast incurr'd ;
 And shun the greater, which may yet remain.
 'Three months, three dang'rous months thou hast preserv'd
 'Thy infant's life, and in thy house conceal'd him !
 Should Pharaoh know !

JOCHEBED.

Oh ! let the tyrant know,
 And feel what he inflicts ! Yes, hear me, Heav'n !
 Send the right aiming thunderbolts——But hush,
 My impious murmurs ! Is it not thy will,
 Thou, infinite in mercy ? 'Thou permitt'st
 This seeming evil for some latent good.
 Yes, I will laud thy grace, and bless thy goodness
 For what I have, and not arraign thy wisdom
 For what I fear to lose. O, I will bless thee,
 That Aaron will be spar'd ! that my first born
 Lives safe and undisturb'd ! that he was given me
 Before this impious persecution rag'd !

MIRIAM.

And yet who knows but the fell tyrant's rage
May reach *his* precious life?

JOCHEBED.

I fear for him,
For thee, for all. A doating parent lives
In many lives; thro' many a nerve she feels;
From child to child the quick affections spread,
For ever wand'ring, yet for ever fix'd.
Nor does division weaken, nor the force
Of constant operation e'er exhaust
Parental love. All other passions change
With changing circumstances; rise or fall,
Dependent on their object; claim returns;
Live on reciprocation, and expire
Unfed by hope. A mother's fondness reigns
Without a rival, and without an end.

MIRIAM.

But say what Heav'n inspires, to save thy son?

JOCHEBED.

Since the dear fatal morn which gave him birth,
I have revolv'd in my distracted mind
Each mean to save his life; and many a thought,
Which fondness prompted, prudence has oppos'd
As perilous and rash. With these poor hands
I've fram'd a little ark of slender reeds;
With pitch and slime I have secur'd the sides:
In this frail cradle I intend to lay
My little helpless infant, and expose him
Upon the banks of Nile.

MIRIAM.

'Tis full of danger.

JOCHEBED.

'Tis danger to expose, and death to keep him.

MIRIAM.

Yet, Oh ! reflect. Should the fierce crocodile,
The native and the tyrant of the Nile,
Seize the defenceless infant !

JOCHEBED.

Oh, forbear !

Spare my fond heart. Yet not the crocodile,
Nor all the deadly monsters of the deep,
To me are half so terrible as PHARAOH,
That heathen king, that royal murderer !

MIRIAM.

Should he escape (which yet I dare not hope)
Each sea-born monster, yet the winds and waves
He cannot 'scape.

JOCHEBED.

Know, God is ev'ry where ;

Not to one narrow, partial spot confin'd ;
No, not to chosen ISRAEL : He extends
'Thro' all the vast infinitude of space.
At his command the furious tempests rise,
The blasting of the breath of his displeasure :
He tells the world of waters when to roar ;
And at his bidding, winds and seas are calm.
In HIM, not in an arm of flesh, I trust ;
In HIM, whose promise never yet has fail'd,
I place my confidence.

MIRIAM.

What must I do ?

Command thy daughter, for thy words have wak'd
An holy boldness in my youthful breast.

JOCHEBED.

Go then, my MIRIAM ! go, and take the infant.
Buried in harmless slumbers there he lies :

MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES:

Let me not see him—spare my heart that pang.
 Yet sure, one little look may be indulg'd,
 One kiss—perhaps the last. No more, my soul!
 That fondness would be fatal—I should keep him.
 I could not doom to death the babe I clasp'd.
 Did ever mother kill her sleeping boy?
 I dare not hazard it—The task be thine.
 Oh! do not wake my child; remove him softly;
 And gently lay him on the river's brink.

MIRIAM.

Did those magicians, whom the sons of Egypt
 Consult, and think all-potent, join their skill,
 And was it great as Egypt's sons believe;
 Yet all their secret wizard arts combin'd
 To save this little ark of Bulrushes,
 Thus fearfully expos'd, could not effect it.
 Their spells, their incantations, and dire charms
 Could not preserve it.

JOCHEBED.

Know, this ark is charm'd
 With spells, which impious Egypt never knew:
 With invocations to the living God
 I twisted every slender reed together,
 And with a prayer did every osier weave.

MIRIAM.

I go.

JOCHEBED.

Yet e'er thou goest, observe me well.
 When thou hast laid him in his watry bed,
 O leave him not; but at a distance wait,
 And mark what Heav'n's high will determines for him.
 Lay him among the flags on yonder beach,
 Just where the royal gardens meet the Nile.

I dare not follow him, Suspicion's eye
 Would note my wild demeanor ; MIRIAM, yes,
 The mother's fondness would betray the child.
 Farewell ! God of my fathers, Oh protect him !

P A R T II.

SCENE, on the Banks of the NILE.

Enter MIRIAM, after having deposited the child.

YES, I have laid him in his watry bed,
 His watry grave, I fear !——I tremble still ;
 It was a cruel task——still I must weep !
 But ah ! my mother, who shall soothe thy griefs ?
 The flags and sea-weeds will awhile sustain
 Their precious load, but it must sink ere long !
 Sweet babe, farewell ! Yet think not I will leave thee ;
 No, I will watch thee, till the greedy waves
 Devour thy little bark : I'll sit me down,
 And sing to thee, sweet babe ! Thou canst not hear ;
 But 'twill amuse me, while I watch thy fate.

[She sits down on a bank, and sings.]

S O N G.

I.

THOU, who canst make the feeble strong,
 O God of Israel, hear my song !
 Not mine such notes as Egypt's daughters raise ;
 'Tis thee, O God of Hosts, I strive to praise.

II.

Ye winds, the servants of the LORD,
 Ye waves, obedient to his word,
 O spare the babe committed to your trust;
 And Israel shall confess the LORD is just!

III.

Tho' doom'd to find an early grave,
 This helpless infant thou canst save;
 And he, whose death's decreed by Pharaoh's hand,
 May rise a prophet to redeem the land.
[She rises, and looks out.]

Who moves this way? of royal port she seems;
 Perhaps sent hither by the hand of Heav'n,
 To prop the falling house of Levi.——Soft;
 I'll listen unperceiv'd, these trees will hide me.
[She stands behind.]

*Enter the PRINCESS of EGYPT, attended by a train
 of Ladies.*

PRINCESS.

No farther, virgins; here I mean to rest,
 To taste the pleasant coolness of the breeze;
 Perhaps to bathe in this translucent stream.
 Did not our holy law* enjoin th' ablution
 Frequent and regular; it still were needful,
 To mitigate the fervors of our clime.
 MELITA, stay—the rest at distance wait.

[They all go out, except one.]

The PRINCESS looks out.

Sure, or I much mistake, or I perceive,
 Upon the sedgy margin of the Nile

* The ancient Egyptians used to wash their bodies four times every twenty-four hours.

A chest ; entangled in the reeds it seems ;
Discern'st thou aught ?

MELITA.

Something, but what I know not.

PRINCESS.

Go, and examine what this sight may mean.

[*Exit Maid.*]

MIRIAM, *behind.*

O blest, beyond my hopes ! he is discover'd ;
My brother will be sav'd ! who is this stranger ?
Ah ! 'tis the Princess, cruel Pharaoh's daughter.
If she resemble her inhuman fire,
She must be cruel too ; yet fame reports her
Most merciful and mild :—I'll mark th' event,
And pray that Heav'n may prompt her to preserve him.

Re-enter MELITA.

PRINCESS.

Hast thou discover'd what the vessel is ?

MELITA.

Oh, Princess, I have seen the strangest sight !
Within the vessel lies a sleeping babe,
A fairer infant have I never seen !

PRINCESS.

Who knows, but some unhappy Hebrew woman
Has thus expos'd her infant, to evade
The stern decree of my too cruel fire ?
Unhappy mothers ! oft my heart has bled
In secret anguish o'er your slaughter'd sons.

MELITA.

Should this be one, my Princess knows the danger.

PRINCESS.

No danger should deter from acts of mercy.

MIRIAM, *behind*.

A thousand blessings on her princely head !

PRINCESS.

Too much the sons of Jacob have endur'd
From royal Pharaoh's unrelenting hate ;
Too much our house has crush'd their alien race.
Is't not enough, that cruel task-masters
Grind them by hard oppression and stern bondage ?
Is't not enough, my father owes his greatness,
His palaces, his fanes magnificent ;
Those structures which the world with wonder views,
To the hard toils of much insulted Israel ?
To them his growing cities owe their splendour,
Their labours built fair Rameses and Pythom ;
And now, at length, his still increasing rage
To iron bondage adds the guilt of murder.
And shall this little helpless infant perish ?
Forbid it, justice ; and forbid it, Heav'n !

MELITA.

I know, thy royal father fears the strength
Of this still growing race, who flourish more
The more they are oppress'd ; he dreads their numbers.

PRINCESS.

Apis forbid ! Pharaoh afraid of Israel !
Yet should this outcast race, this hapless people
E'er grow to such a formidable greatness :
(Which all the gods avert, whom Egypt worships)
This infant's life can never serve their cause,
Nor can his single death prevent their greatness.

MELITA.

I know not that : by weakest instruments
Sometimes are great events produc'd ; this child

Perhaps may live to serve his upstart race
More than an host.

PRINCESS.

How ill does it beseem
Thy tender years and gentle womanhood,
To steel thy breast to pity's sacred touch !
So weak, so unprotected is our sex,
So constantly expos'd, so very helpless ;
That did not Heav'n itself enjoin compassion,
Yet human policy should make us kind,
Lest we should need the pity we refuse.
Yes, I will save him——lead me to the place ;
And from the feeble rushes we'll remove
The little ark, which cradles this poor babe.
[*The PRINCESS and her Maid go out.*]

MIRIAM *comes forward.*

How poor were words to speak my boundless joy !
The Princess will protect him ; bless her, Heav'n !
[*She looks out after the Princess, and describes her action.*]

With what impatient steps she seeks the shore !
Now she approaches where the ark is laid !
With what compassion, with what angel-sweetness,
She bends to look upon the infant's face !
She takes his little hand in her's—he wakes—
She smiles upon him—hark ! alas, he cries ;
Weep on, sweet babe ! weep on, till thou hast touch'd
Each chord of pity, waken'd every sense
Of melting sympathy, and stol'n her soul !
She takes him in her arms—O lovely Princess !
How goodness heightens beauty ! now she clasps him
With fondness to her heart : she gives him now
With tender caution to her damsel's arms :
She points her to the palace, and again
This way the Princess bends her gracious steps :
The virgin train retire, and bear the child.

Re-enter the PRINCESS.

PRINCESS.

Did ever innocence and infant beauty
Plead with such dumb but powerful eloquence ?
If I, a stranger, feel these soft emotions,
What must the mother who expos'd him feel !
Go, fetch a woman of the Hebrew race,
That she may nurse the babe ; and, by her garb,
Lo such a one is here !

MIRIAM.

Princess, all hail !

Forgive the bold intrusion of thy servant,
Who stands a charm'd spectator of thy goodness.

PRINCESS.

I have redeem'd an infant from the waves,
Whom I intend to nurture as mine own.

MIRIAM.

My transports will betray me ! [*Aside.*] Gen'rous
Princess !

PRINCESS.

Know'st thou a matron of the Hebrew race,
To whom I may confide him ?

MIRIAM.

Well I know

A prudent matron of the house of Levi ;
Her name is Jochebed, the wife of Amram ;
Gentle she is, and fam'd throughout her tribe
For soft humanity ; full well I know
That she will rear him with a mother's love.
[*Aside.*] O truly spoke ! a mother's love indeed !
'To her despairing arms I mean to give
This precious trust ; the nurse shall be the mother !

PRINCESS.

With speed conduct this matron to the palace.
 Yes, I will raise him up in princely greatness,
 And he shall be my son. His name be *Moses*,
 For I have drawn him from the perilous flood.

[They go out. She kneels.]

Thou great Unseen! thou causest gentle deeds,
 And smil'st on what thou causest: thus I bless thee,
 That thou didst deign consult the tender make
 Of yielding human hearts, when thou ordain'dst
 Humanity a virtue! Didst incline
 The natural bias of the soul to mercy,
 Then mad'st that mercy duty! Gracious Pow'r!
 Mad'st the keen rapture exquisite as right;
 Beyond the joys of sense; as pleasure sweet;
 As reason constant, and as instinct strong!

 PART III.

Enter JOCHEBED.

I'VE almost reach'd the place—with cautious steps
 I must approach to where the ark is laid,
 Lest from the royal gardens any spy me.
 —Poor babe! ere this, the pressing calls of hunger
 Have broke thy short repose; the chilling waves,
 Perhaps, have drench'd thy little shiv'ring limbs.
 What—what must he have suffer'd!—No one sees me:
 But soft, does no one listen!—Ah! how hard,
 How very hard for fondness to be prudent!
 Now is the moment, to embrace and feed him.

[She looks out.]

Where's Miriam? she has left her little charge;
 Perhaps through fear, perhaps she was detected.
 How wild is thought! how terrible conjecture!

A mother's fondness frames a thousand fears,
And shapes unreal evils into being.

[She looks towards the river.]

Ah me ! where is he ? soul-distracting fight !
He is not there—he's lost, he's gone, he's drown'd !
Toss'd by each beating surge my infant floats ;
Cold, cold and watry is thy grave, my child !
O no—I see the ark—Transporting fight !

[She goes towards it.]

What do I see ? Alas, the ark is empty !
The casket's left, the precious gem is gone !
You spar'd him, pitying spirits of the deep !
But vain your mercy ; some insatiate beast,
Cruel as Pharaoh, took the life you spar'd—
And I shall never, never see him more !

Enter MIRIAM.

JOCHEBED.

Come, and lament with me thy brother's loss !

MIRIAM.

Come, and adore with me the God of Jacob !

JOCHEBED.

Miriam—the child is dead !

MIRIAM.

He lives, he lives !

JOCHEBED.

Impossible : Oh ! do not mock my grief !
Seest thou that empty vessel ?

MIRIAM.

From that vessel

Th' Egyptian Princess took him.

JOCHEBED.

Pharaoh's daughter ?

Then still he will be slain.

MIRIAM.

His life is safe ;

For know, she means to rear him as her own.

JOCHEBED.

[Falls on her knees in rapture.

To GOD the LORD, the glory be ascrib'd !

Oh magnify'd forever be thy might,

Who mercy in a heathen's heart canst plant,

And from the depth of evil bring forth good !

[She rises.

MIRIAM.

O blest event, beyond our warmest hopes.

JOCHEBED.

What ! shall my son be nurtur'd in a court,

In princely grandeur bred ? taught every art,

And every wondrous science Egypt knows ?

Yet ah ! I tremble, Miriam ; should he learn,

With Egypt's polish'd arts, her baneful faith !

O woe ! exchange for death ! Yes, should he learn

In you proud palace to disown his hand

Who thus has sav'd him : should he e'er embrace

(As sure he will, if bred in Pharaoh's court)

The gross idolatries which Egypt owns,

Her graven images, her brutish gods ;

Then shall I wish he had not been prefer'd,

To shame his fathers, and deny his faith.

MIRIAM. -

Then, to dispel thy fears, and crown thy joy,
 Hear farther wonders—Know, the gen'rous Princess
 To thine own care the darling child commits.

JOCHEBED.

Speak, while my joy will give me time to listen !

MIRIAM.

By her commission'd, thou behold'st me here,
To seek a matron of the Hebrew race,
To nurse him ; thou, my mother, art that matron.—
I said, I knew thee well ; that thou would'st rear him
Ev'n with a mother's fondness ; she who bare him
(I told the Princess) could not love him more.

JOCHEBED.

Fountain of Mercy ! whose pervading eye
Beholds the heart, and sees what passes there,
Accept my thoughts for thanks ! I have no words—
How poor were human language to express
My gratitude, my wonder, and my joy !

MIRIAM.

Yes, thou shalt pour into his infant mind
The purest precepts of the purest faith.

JOCHEBED.

O ! I will fill his tender soul with virtue,
And warm his bosom with devotion's flame !
Aid me, celestial Spirit ! with thy grace,
And be my labours with thy influence crown'd :
Without it they were vain. 'Then, then, my Miriam,
When he is furnish'd, 'gainst the evil day,
With God's whole armour,* girt with sacred truth,
And as a breast-plate, wearing righteousness,
Arm'd with the Spirit of God, the shield of faith,
And with the helmet of salvation crown'd,
Inur'd to watching, and dispos'd to pray'r ;
Then may I send him to a dangerous court,
And safely trust him in a perilous world,
'Too full of tempting snares and fond delusions !

* 1 Thess. chap. v. Also, Ephes. chap. vi.

MIRIAM.

May bounteous Heaven thy pious cares reward !

JOCHEBED.

O Amram ! O my husband ! when thou com'st,
Wearied at night, to rest thee from the toils
Impos'd by haughty Pharaoh ; what a tale
Have I to tell thee ! yes—thy darling son
Was lost, and is restor'd ; was dead, and lives !

MIRIAM.

How joyful shall we spend the live-long night
In praises to JEHOVAH, who thus mocks
All human foresight, and converts the means
Of seeming ruin into great deliv'rance !

JOCHEBED.

Had not my child been doom'd to such strange perils,
As a fond mother trembles to recall,
He had not been preserv'd.

MIRIAM.

And mark still farther :
Had he been fav'd by any other hand,
He had been still expos'd to equal ruin.

JOCHEBED.

Then let us join to bless the hand of Heav'n,
That this poor outcast of the house of Israel,
Condemn'd to die by Pharaoh, kept in secret
By my advent'rous fondness ; then expos'd
Ev'n by that very fondness which conceal'd him,
Is now, to fill the wondrous round of mercy,
Preserv'd from perishing by Pharaoh's daughter,
Sav'd by the very hand which sought to crush him !

Wife and unsearchable are all thy ways,
Thou God of mercies !—Lead me to my child !

THE END.

Persons of the Drama.

SAUL, King of ISRAEL.

ABNER, his General.

JESSE.

ELIAB,

ABINADAB, } Sons of JESSE.

DAVID,

GOLIATH, the PHILISTINE Giant.

PHILISTINES, ISRAELITES, &c. &c.

CHORUS OF HEBREW WOMEN.

The SCENE lies in the Camp, in the Valley of
ELAH and the adjacent Plain.

❧ The Subject of the Drama is taken from the Seventeenth Chapter of the First Book of Samuel.

David and Goliath :

A

SACRED DRAMA.

PART I.

O bienheureux mille fois,
L'Enfant que le Seigneur aime,
Que de bonne heure entend sa voix,
Et que ce Dieu daigne instruire lui-même !
Loin du monde élevé ; de tous les dons des Cieux,
Il est orné dès sa naissance ;
Et du méchant l'abord contagieux
N'altère point son innocence.——ATHALIE.

SCENE, a Shepherd's Tent on a Plain.

DAVID, *under a spreading tree, plays on his harp, and sings.*

I.

GREAT Lord of all things ! Pow'r divine !
Breathe on this erring heart of mine
Thy grace serene and pure ;
Defend my frail, my erring youth,
And teach me this important truth—
The humble are secure.

II.

Teach me to bless my lowly lot,
Confin'd to this paternal cot,
Remote from regal state ;
Content to court the cooling glade,
Inhale the breeze, enjoy the shade,
And love my humble fate.

D

III.

No anxious vigils here I keep,
 No dreams of gold distract my sleep,
 Nor lead my heart astray ;
 Nor blasting Envy's tainted gale
 Pollutes the pleasures of the vale,
 To vex my harmless day.

IV.

Yon tow'r, which rears its head so high,
 And bids defiance to the sky,
 Invites the hostile winds :
 You branching oak, extending wide,
 Provokes destruction by its pride,
 And courts the fall it finds.

V.

'Then let me shun th' ambitious deed,
 And all the dangerous paths which lead
 To honours falsely won :
 Lord, in thy sure protection blest,
 Submissive will I ever rest,
 And may thy will be done !
[He lays down his harp, and rises.]

DAVID.

This Shepherd's life were dull and tasteless all,
 Without the charm of soothing song or harp :
 With it, not undelightful is the haunt
 Of wood, or lonely grove, or russet plain,
 Made vocal by the Muse. With this lov'd harp,
 'This daily solace of my cares, I sooth'd
 The melancholy monarch, when he lay,
 Smit by the chill and spirit-quenching hand
 Of blank despair. God of my fathers ! hear me :
 Here I devote my harp, my verse, myself,
 To thy blest service ! gladly to proclaim

Glory to God on high, on earth good will
 To man; to pour my grateful soul before thee;
 To sing thy pow'r, thy wisdom, and thy love,
 And every gracious attribute: to paint
 The charms of heav'n-born virtue! So shall I
 (Though with long interval of worth) aspire
 To imitate the work of saints above,
 Of Cherub and of Seraphim. My heart,
 My talents, all I am, and all I have,
 Is thine, O Father! Gracious LORD, accept
 The humble dedication! Offer'd gifts
 Of slaughter'd bulls, and goats sacrificial,
 Thou hast refus'd: but lo! I come, O LORD,
 To do thy will! the living sacrifice
 Of an obedient heart I lay before thee!
 This humble offering more shall please thee, LORD,
 Than horned bullocks, ceremonial rites,
 New moons, appointed passovers, and fasts!
 Yet those I too will keep; but not instead
 Of holiness substantial, inward worth;
 As commutation cheap for pious deeds,
 And purity of life. But as the types
 Of better things; as fair external signs
 Of inward holiness and secret truth.

But see, my father, good old Jesse comes!
 To cheer the setting evening of whose life,
 Content, a simple shepherd here I dwell,
 Though Israel is in arms, and royal Saul,
 Encamp'd in yonder field, defies Philistia.

JESSE, DAVID.

JESSE.

Blest be the gracious Power, who gave my age
 To boast a son like thee! Thou art the staff
 Which props my bending years, and makes me bear
 The heavy burthen of declining age
 With fond complacence. How unlike thy fate,

O venerable Eli ! But two sons,
 But only two, to gild the dim remains
 Of life's departing day, and bless thy age,
 And both were curses to thee ! Witness, Heaven !
 In all the tedious catalogue of pains
 Humanity turns o'er, if there be one
 So terrible to human tenderness,
 As an unnatural child !

DAVID.

O, my lov'd father !

Long may'st thou live, in years and honours rich ;
 To taste, and to communicate the joys,
 The thousand fond endearing charities
 Of tenderness domestic ; Nature's best
 And loveliest gift, with which she well atones
 The niggard boon of fortune.

JESSE.

O, my son !

Of all the graces which adorn thy youth,
 I, with a father's fondness, must commend
 Thy tried humility. For though the Seer
 Pour'd on thy chosen head the sacred oil,
 In sign of future greatness, in sure pledge
 Of highest dignity ; yet here thou dwell'st,
 Content with toil, and careless of repose ;
 And (harder still for an ingenuous mind)
 Content to be obscure ; content to watch,
 With careful eye, thine humble father's flock !
 O earthly emblem of celestial things !
 So Israel's Shepherd watches o'er his fold ;
 The weak ones in his fost'ring bosom bears ;
 And gently leads, with his sustaining hand,
 The feeble ones with young.

DAVID.

Know'st thou, my father,
 Aught from the field ? for though so near the camp,

Though war's proud ensigns stream on yonder plain,
 And all Philistia's swarming hosts encamp,
 Oppos'd to royal Saul, beneath whose banners
 My brothers lift the spear; I have not left
 My fleecy charge, by thee committed to me,
 To learn the present fortune of the war.

JESSE.

And wisely hast thou done. Thrice happy realm,
 Who shall submit one day to his command
 Who can so well obey! Obedience leads
 To certain honours. Not the tow'ring wing
 Of eagle-plum'd ambition mounts so surely
 To Fortune's highest summit, as obedience.

[A distant sound of trumpets.]

But why that sudden ardour, O my son?
 That trumpet's sound (though so remote its voice,
 We hardly catch the echo as it dies)
 Has rous'd the mantling crimson in thy cheek,
 Kindled the martial spirit in thine eye,
 And my young shepherd feels an hero's fire!

DAVID.

Thou hast not told the posture of the war;
 And much my beating bosom pants to hear.

JESSE.

Uncertain is the fortune of the field.
 I tremble for thy brothers, thus expos'd
 To constant peril; nor for them alone
 Does the quick feeling agonize my heart.
 I too lament, that desolating war
 Hangs his fell banner o'er my native land,
 Belov'd Jerusalem! O war, what art thou?
 After the brightest conquest, what remains
 Of all thy glories? For the vanquish'd, chains!
 For the proud victor, what? Alas! to reign
 O'er desolat'd nations! a drear waste,

DAVID AND GOLIATH :

By one man's crime, by one man's lust of pow'r,
 Unpeopled ! Naked plains and ravag'd fields
 Succeed to smiling harvests, and the fruits
 Of peaceful olive, luscious fig and vine !
 Here, rifled temples are the cavern'd dens
 Of savage beasts, or haunt of birds obscene.
 There, populous cities blacken in the sun,
 And, in the gen'ral wreck, proud palaces
 Lie undistinguish'd, save by the dun smoke
 Of recent conflagration. When the song
 Of dear-bought joy, with many a triumph swell'd,
 Salutes the victor's ear, and soothes his pride ;
 How is the grateful harmony profan'd
 With the sad dissonance of virgins' cries,
 Who mourn their brothers slain ! Of matrons hoar,
 Who clasp their wither'd hands, and fondly ask,
 With iteration shrill, their slaughter'd sons !
 How is the laurel's verdure stain'd with blood,
 And soil'd with widows' tears !

DAVID.

Thrice mournful truth !

Yet when our country's rights, her sacred laws,
 Her holy faith, are scorn'd and trampled on,
 Then, then religion calls ; then God himself
 Commands us to defend his injur'd Name.
 'Twere then inglorious weakness, mean self-love,
 To lie inactive, when the stirring voice
 Of the shrill trumpet wakes to desp'rate deeds ;
 Nor with heroic valour boldly dare
 Th' idolatrous heathen bands, ev'n to the death.

JESSE.

God and thy country claim the life they gave.
 No other cause can sanctify resentment.

DAVID.

Sure virtuous friendship is a noble cause !
 O were the princely Jonathan in danger,

How would I die, well pleas'd in his defence !
When ('twas long since, then but a stripling boy)
I made short sojourn in his father's palace,
(At first to soothe his troubled mind with song,
His armour-bearer next ;) I well remember
'The gracious bounties of the gallant prince.
How would he sit, attentive to my strain ;
While to my harp I sung the harmless joys
Which crown a shepherd's life ! How would he cry—
Bless'd youth, far happier in thy native worth,
Far richer in the talent Heav'n has lent thee,
'Than if a crown hung o'er thy anxious brow.
The jealous monarch mark'd our growing friendship ;
And as my favour grew with those about him,
His royal bounty lessen'd, till at length
For Bethl'hem's safer shades I left the court :
Nor would these alter'd features now be known,
Grown into manly strength ; nor this chang'd form,
Enlarg'd with age, and clad in russet weed.

JESSE.

I have employment for thee, my lov'd son,
Will please thy active spirit. Go, my boy,
Haste to the field of war, to yonder camp,
Where, in the vale of Elah, mighty Saul
Commands the hosts of Israel. Greet thy brothers :
Observe their deeds ; note their demeanor well ;
And mark if wisdom on their actions waits.
Bear to them too (for well the waste of war
Will make it needful) such plain healthful viands
As furnish out our frugal shepherd's meal :
And to the valiant Captain of their host
Present such rural gifts as suit our fortune.
Heap'd on the board within my tent thou'lt find them.

DAVID.

With joy I'll bear thy presents to my brothers ;
And to the valiant Captain of their host
'The rural gifts thy gratitude assigns him.

What transport, to behold the tented field,
 The pointed spear, the blaze of shields and arms;
 And all the proud accoutrements of war!
 But, oh! far dearer transport would it yield me,
 Could this right arm alone avenge the cause
 Of injur'd Israel, and preserve the lives
 Of guiltless thousands, doom'd perhaps to bleed!

JESSE.

Let not thy youth be dazzled, O my son!
 With deeds of bold emprise, as valour only
 Were virtue; and the gentle arts of peace,
 Of truth and justice, were not worth thy care.
 When thou shalt view the splendors of the war,
 The gay caparison, the burnish'd shield,
 The plume-crown'd helmet, and the glitt'ring spear,
 Scorn not the humble virtues of the shade;
 Nor think that Heav'n views only with applause
 The active merit, and the busy toil
 Of heroes, statesmen, and the bustling sons
 Of public care. These have their just reward
 In wealth, in honours, and the well-earn'd fame
 Their high achievements bring. 'Tis in this view,
 That virtue is her proper recompense.
 Wealth, as its natural consequence, will flow
 From industry; toil with success is crown'd:
 From splendid actions high renown will spring.
 Such is the usual course of human things.
 For Wisdom Infinite permits, that thus
 Effects to causes be proportionate,
 And nat'ral ends by nat'ral means achiev'd.
 But in the future estimate, which Heav'n
 Will make of things terrestrial, know, my son,
 That no inferior blessing is reserv'd
 For the mild *passive* virtues; meek Content,
 Heroic Self-denial; nobler far
 Than all th' achievements noisy Fame reports,
 When her shrill trumpet proclaims the proud success

Which desolates the nations. But, on earth,
 These are not always fortunate; because
 Eternal Justice keeps them for the bliss
 Of final recompense, for the dread day
 Of gen'ral retribution. O my son!
 The ostentatious virtues, which still press
 For notice, and for praise; the brilliant deeds,
 Which live but in the eye of observation,
 These have their meed at once. But there's a joy,
 To the fond votaries of Fame unknown;
 To hear the still small voice of conscience speak
 Its whisp'ring plaudit to the silent soul.
 Heav'n notes the sigh afflicted Goodness heaves;
 Hears the low plaint by human ear unheard,
 And from the cheek of patient Sorrow wipes
 The tear, by mortal eye unseen or scorn'd.

DAVID.

As Hermon's dews their grateful freshness shed,
 And cheer the herbage, and the flow'rs renew;
 So do thy words a quick'ning balm infuse,
 And grateful sink in my delighted soul.

JESSE.

Go then, my child! and may the gracious God,
 Who bless'd our fathers, bless my much-lov'd son!

DAVID.

Farewell, my father! and of this be sure,
 That not a precept from thy honour'd lip,
 Shall fall, by me unnoticed; not one grace,
 One venerable virtue, which adorns
 Thy daily life, but I, with watchful care,
 And due observance, will in mine transplant it.

[Exit DAVID.]

JESSE.

He's gone! and still my aching eyes pursue,
 And strain their orbs still longer to behold him.

Oh! who can tell, when I may next embrace him?
Who can declare the counsels of the Lord?
Or when the moment pre-ordain'd by Heav'n
To fill his great designs may come? This son,
This blessing of my age, is set apart
For high exploits; the chosen instrument
Of all-disposing Heav'n for mighty deeds.
Still I recall the day, and to my mind
The scene is ever present; when the Seer,
Illustrious Samuel, to the humble shades
Of Bethlehem came, pretending sacrifice,
To screen his errand from the jealous king.
He sanctify'd us first, me, and my sons;
For sanctity increas'd should still precede
Increase of dignity. When he declar'd
He came, commission'd from on high, to find,
Among the sons of Jesse, Israel's king;
Astonishment entranc'd my wond'ring soul.
Yet was it not a wild, tumultuous bliss;
Such rash delight as promis'd honours yield
To light, vain minds? No, 'twas a doubtful joy,
Chastis'd by tim'rous virtue, lest a gift
So splendid, and so dang'rous, might destroy
Him it was meant to raise. My eldest born,
Young Eliab, tall of stature, I presented;
But God, who judges not by outward form,
But tries the heart, forbad the holy prophet
To choose my eldest born. For Saul, he said,
Gave proof, that fair proportion, and the grace
Of limb or feature, ill repaid the want
Of virtue. All my other sons alike
By Samuel were rejected: till, at last,
On my young boy, on David's chosen head,
The prophet pour'd the consecrated oil.
Yet ne'er did pride elate him, ne'er did scorn
For his rejected elders swell his heart.
Not in such gentle charity to him
His haughtier brothers live: but all he pardons.

To meditation and to humble toil,
 To pray'r, and praise devoted, here he dwells.
 O may the graces which adorn retreat,
 One day delight a court ! record his name
 With saints and prophets, dignify his race,
 Instruct mankind, and sanctify a world !

PART II.

SCENE, The Camp.

ELIAB, ABINADAB, ABNER,
 ISRAELITES.

ELIAB.

STILL is the event of this long war uncertain :
 Still do the adverse hosts, on either side,
 Protract, with ling'ring caution, an encounter,
 Which must to one be fatal.

ABINADAB.

This descent,
 Thus to the very confines of our land,
 Proclaims the sanguine hope that fires the foe.
 In Ephes-dammim boldly they encamp :
 Th' uncircumcis'd Philistines pitch their tents
 On Judah's hallow'd earth.

ELIAB.

Full forty days
 Has the insulting giant, proud Goliath,
 The champion of Philistia, fiercely challeng'd
 Some Israelitish foe. But who so vain
 To dare such force unequal ? who so bent
 On sure destruction, to accept his terms,

DAVID AND GOLIATH :

And rush on death, beneath the giant force,
Of his enormous bulk ?

ABINADAB.

'Tis near the time,
When, in th' adjacent valley which divides
Th' opposing armies, he is wont to make
His daily challenge.

ELIAB.

Much I marvel, brother,
No greetings from our father reach our ears.
With ease and plenty blest'd, he little recks
The daily hardships which his sons endure.
But see ! behold his darling son approaches !

ABINADAB.

How, David here ? whence this unlook'd-for guest ?

ELIAB.

A spy upon our actions ; sent no doubt,
To scan our deeds, with beardless gravity
Affecting wisdom ; to observe each word,
To magnify the venial faults of youth,
And construe harmless mirth to foul offence.

Enter DAVID.

DAVID.

All hail, my dearest brothers !

ELIAB.

Means thy greeting
True love, or arrogant scorn !

DAVID.

O, most true love !
Sweet as the precious ointment, which bedew'd
The sacred head of Aaron, and descended

Upon his hallow'd vest ; so sweet, my brothers,
Is fond fraternal amity ; such love
As my touch'd bosom feels at your approach.

ELIAB.

Still that fine glozing speech, those holy saws,
And all that trick of studied sanctity,
Of smooth-turn'd periods, and trim eloquence,
Which charms thy doating father. But confess,
What dost thou here ? Is it to soothe thy pride,
And gratify thy vain desire to roam
In quest of pleasures unallow'd ? Or com'st thou
A willing spy, to note thy brothers' deeds ?
Where hast thou left those few poor straggling sheep ?
More suited to thy ignorance and years
The care of those, than here to wander idly.
Why cam'st thou hither ?

DAVID.

Is there not a cause ?
Why that displeasure kindling in thine eye,
My angry brother ? why those taunts unkind ?
Not idly bent on sport ; not to delight
Mine eye with all this gay parade of war ;
To gratify a roving appetite,
Or fondly to indulge a curious ear
With any tale of rumour, am I come :
But to approve myself a loving brother.
I bring the blessing of your aged fire,
With gifts of such plain cates, and rural viands,
As suit his frugal fortune. Tell me now,
Where the bold Captain of your host encamps ?

ELIAB.

Wherefore inquire ? what boots it thee to know ?
Behold him there : great Abner, fam'd in arms.

DAVID AND GOLIATH :

DAVID.

I bring thee, mighty Abner, from my father,
 (A simple shepherd swain in yonder vale)
 Such humble gifts as shepherd swains bestow.

ABNER.

Thanks, gentle youth ! with pleasure I receive
 The grateful off'ring. Why does thy quick eye
 Thus wander with unsatisfied delight ?

DAVID.

New as I am to all the trade of war,
 Each sound has novelty ; each thing I see
 Attracts attention ; every noise I hear
 Awakes confus'd emotions ; indistinct,
 Yet full of charming tumult, sweet distraction.
 'Tis all delightful hurry ! Oh ! the joy
 Of young ideas painted on the mind,
 In the warm glowing colours fancy spreads
 On objects not yet known, when all is new,
 And all is lovely ! Ah ! what warlike sound
 Salutes my ravish'd ear ?

[*Sound of trumpet.*]

ABNER.

'Tis the Philistine,
 Proclaiming, by his herald, through the ranks,
 His near approach. Each morning he repeats
 His challenge to our bands.

DAVID.

Ha ! what Philistine ?

Who is he ?

ELIAB.

Wherefore ask ? for thy raw youth,
 And rustic ignorance, 'twere fitter learn
 Some rural art ; some secret to prevent

Contagion in thy flocks; some better means
 To save their fleece immaculate. These mean arts,
 Of soft inglorious peace, far better suit
 Thy low obscurity, than thus to seek
 High things, pertaining to exploits of arms.

DAVID.

Urg'd as I am, I will not answer thee.
 Who conquers his own spirit, O my brother!
 He is the only conqueror.—Again
 That shout mysterious! Pray you, tell me who
 This proud Philistine is, who sends defiance
 To Israel's hardy chieftains?

ABNER.

Stranger youth!
 So lovely and so mild is thy demeanour,
 So gentle, and so patient; such the air
 Of candour and of courage, which adorns
 Thy blooming features, thou hast won my love;
 And I will tell thee.

DAVID.

Mighty Abner! thanks.

ABNER.

Thrice and no more he sounds, his daily rule.
 This man of war, this champion of Philistia,
 Is of the sons of Anak's giant race.
 Goliath is his name. His fearful stature,
 Unparallel'd in Israel, measures more
 Than twice three cubits. On his tow'ring head
 A helm of burnish'd brass the giant wears,
 So pond'rous, it would crush the stoutest man
 In all our hosts. A coat of mailed armour
 Guards his capacious trunk; compar'd with which
 The amplest oak, that spreads his rugged arms
 In Bashan's groves, were small. About his neck
 A shining corset hangs. On his vast thigh

The plaited cuirass firmly jointed stands.
 But who shall tell the wonders of his spear,
 And hope to gain belief? of massive iron
 Its temper'd frame; not less than the broad beam
 'To which the busy weaver hangs his loom;
 Not to be wielded by a mortal hand,
 Save by his own. An armour-bearer walks
 Before this mighty champion, in his hand
 Bearing the giant's shield. 'Thrice, every morn,
 His herald sounds the trumpet of defiance;
 Off'ring at once to end the long-drawn war,
 In single combat, 'gainst that hardy foe
 Who dares encounter him.

DAVID.

Say, mighty Abner!

What are the haughty terms of his defiance?

ABNER.

Proudly he stalks around th' extremest bounds
 Of Elah's valley. His herald sounds the note
 Of offer'd battle. Then the furious giant,
 With such a voice as from the troubled sky,
 In vollied thunder, breaks, thus sends his challenge:
 "Why do you set your battle in array,
 Ye men of Israel? Wherefore waste the lives
 Of needless thousands? Why protract a war,
 Which may at once be ended? Are not you
 Servants to Saul your king? and am not I,
 With triumph let me speak it, a Philistine?
 Choose out a man from all your armed hosts,
 Of courage most approv'd; and I will meet him,
 His single arm to mine. 'Th' event of this
 Shall fix the fate of Israel and Philistia.
 If victory favour him, then will we live
 Your tributary slaves; but if my arm
 Be crown'd with conquest, you shall then live ours.
 Give me a man, if your effeminate bands
 A man can boast. Your armies I defy."

DAVID.

What shall be done to him, who shall subdue
This vile idolater?

ABNER.

He shall receive
Such ample bounties, such profuse rewards,
As might inflame chill age, or cowardice,
Were not the odds so desperate.

DAVID.

Say, what are they?

ABNER.

The royal Saul has promis'd that bold hero,
Who shall encounter and subdue Goliath,
All dignity and favour; that his house
Shall be set free from tribute, and ennobled
With the first honours Israel has to give.
And for the gallant conqueror himself,
No less a recompense than the fair princess,
Our monarch's peerless daughter.

DAVID.

Beauteous Michal?

It is indeed a boon which kings might strive for.
And has none answer'd yet this bold defiance?
What, all this goodly host of Israelites,
God's own peculiar people! all afraid
T' assert God's injur'd honour, and their own?
The king himself, who in his early youth
Wrought deeds of fame! the princely Jonathan!
Not so the gallant youth Philistia fear'd
At Bozez and at Seneh;* when the earth
Shook from her deep foundations, to behold

* 1 Samuel, xiv.

DAVID AND GOLIATH :

The wondrous carnage of his single hand
 On the uncircumcis'd. When he exclaim'd,
 With glorious confidence—" Shall numbers awe me ?
 God will protect his own : with him to save,
 It boots not, friends, by many or by few."
 This was an hero ! Why does he delay
 To meet this boaster ? For thy courtesy,
 Thrice noble Abner, I am bound to thank thee !
 Would'st thou complete thy gen'rous offices ?
 I dare not ask it.

ABNER.

Speak thy wishes freely :
 My soul inclines to serve thee.

DAVID.

Then, O Abner,
 Conduct me to the king ! There is a cause
 Will justify this boldness.

ELIAB.

Braggard, hold !

ABNER.

I take thee at thy word ; and will, with speed,
 Conduct thee to my royal master's presence.
 In yonder tent, the anxious monarch waits
 'Th' event of this day's challenge.

DAVID.

Noble Abner !

Accept my thanks. Now to thy private ear,
 If so thy grace permit, I will unfold
 My secret soul ; and ease my lab'ring breast,
 Which pants with high designs, and beats for glory.

PART III.

SCENE, SAUL's Tent.

SAUL.

WHY was I made a king? what I have gain'd
In envy'd greatness and uneasy pow'r,
I've lost in peace of mind, in virtue lost!
Why did deceitful transports fire my soul,
When Samuel plac'd upon my youthful brow
The crown of Israel? I had known content,
Nay happiness, if happiness unmix'd
'To mortal man were known; had I still liv'd
Among the humble tents of Benjamin.
A shepherd's occupation was my joy.
And ev'ry guiltless day was crown'd with peace.
But now, a fullen cloud forever hangs
O'er the faint sunshine of my brightest hours,
Dark'ning the golden promise of the morn.
I ne'er shall taste the dear domestic joys
My meanest subjects know. True, I have sons,
Whose virtues would have charm'd a private man,
And drawn down blessings on their humble fire.
I love their virtues too; but 'tis a love
Which jealousy has poison'd. Jonathan
Is all a father's fondness could conceive
Of amiable and good.—Of that no more!
He is too popular; the people doat
Upon th' ingenuous graces of his youth.
Curs'd popularity! which makes a father
Detest the merit of a son he loves.
How did their fond idolatry, perforce,
Rescue his sentenc'd life, when doom'd by lot
To perish at Beth-aven,* for the breach

* x Samuel, xiv.

Of strict injunction, that of all my bands,
 Not one that day shou'd taste of food, and live.
 My subjects clamour at this tedious war,
 Yet of my num'rous armed chiefs, not one
 Has courage to engage this man of Gath.
 O for a champion bold enough to face
 This giant boaster, whose repeated threats
 Strike thro' my inmost soul ! There was a time——
 Of that no more !——I am not what I was.
 Should valiant Jonathan accept the challenge,
 'Twould but increase his favour with the people,
 And make the crown sit loosely on my brow.
 Ill could my wounded spirit brook the voice
 Of harsh comparison 'twixt fire and son.

SAUL, ABNER.

ABNER.

What meditation holds thee thus engag'd,
 O king ! and keeps thine active spirit bound ;
 When busy war far other cares demands
 Than ruminating thought, and pale despair ?

SAUL.

Abner, draw near. My weary soul sinks down
 Beneath the heavy pressure of misfortune.
 O for that spirit, which inflam'd my breast
 With sudden fervour, when, among the seers
 And holy sages, my prophetic voice
 Was heard attentive, and the astonish'd throng,
 Wond'ring, exclaim'd, " Is Saul among the prophets ?"
 Where's that bold arm which quell'd th' Amalekite,
 And nobly spar'd fierce Agag and his flocks ?
 'Tis past ; the light of Israel now is quench'd :
 Shorn of his beams, my sun of glory sets !
 Rise Moab, Edom, angry Ammon, rise !
 Come Gaza, Ashdod, come ! let Ekron boast,
 And Askelon rejoice, for Saul——is nothing.

ABNER.

I bring thee news, O king !

SAUL.

My valiant uncle !

What can avail thy news ? A soul oppress'd,
Refuses still to hear the charmer's voice,
Howe'er enticingly he charm. What news
Can soothe my sickly soul, while Gath's fell giant
Repeats each morning to my frighten'd hosts
His daring challenge—none accepting it ?

ABNER.

It is accepted.

SAUL.

Ha ! by whom ? how ? when ?

What prince, what gen'ral, what illustrious hero,
What vet'ran chief, what warrior of renown
Will dare to meet the haughty foe's defiance ?
Speak, my brave gen'ral ! nobler Abner, speak !

ABNER.

No prince, no warrior, no illustrious chief,
No vet'ran hero dares accept the challenge ;
But what will move thy wonder, mighty king !
One train'd to peaceful deeds, and new to arms,
A simple shepherd swain.

SAUL.

O mockery !

No more of this light tale, it suits but ill
Thy bearded gravity : or rather tell it
To credulous age, or weak believing women ;
They love whate'er is marvellous, and doat
On deeds prodigious and incredible,
Which sober sense rejects. I laugh to think
Of thy extravagance. A shepherd's boy
Encounter him, whom nations dread to meet !

DAVID AND GOLIATH :

ABNER.

Is valour, then, peculiar to high birth ?
 If Heav'n had so decreed, know, scornful king,
 That Saul the Benjamite had never reign'd.
 No :—Glory darts her soul-pervading ray,
 On thrones and cottages, regardless still
 Of all the false chimerical distinctions
 Vain human customs make.

SAUL.

Where is this youth ?

ABNER.

Without thy tent he waits. Such humble sweetness,
 Fir'd with the secret conscience of desert ;
 Such manly bearing, temper'd with such softness,
 And so adorn'd with every outward charm
 Of graceful form and feature, saw I never.

SAUL.

Bring me the youth.

ABNER.

He waits thy royal pleasure.

[Exit ABNER.]

SAUL.

What must I think ? Abner himself is brave,
 And skill'd in human kind : nor does he judge
 So lightly, to be caught by specious words,
 And fraud's smooth artifice, without the marks
 Of worth intrinsic. But behold he comes !
 The youth too with him ! Justly did he praise
 The candour, which adorns his open brow.

Re-enter ABNER, and DAVID.

DAVID.

Hail, mighty king !

A B N E R.

Behold thy proffer'd champion.

S A U L.

Art thou the youth, whose high heroic zeal
Aspires to meet the giant son of Anak ?

D A V I D.

If so the king permit.

S A U L.

Impossible !

Why, what experience has thy youth of arms ?
Where didst thou learn the dreadful trade of war ?
Beneath what hoary vet'ran hast thou serv'd ?
What feats achiev'd, what deeds of bold emprise ?
What well rang'd phalanx, and what charging hosts,
What hard campaigns, what sieges hast thou seen ?
Hast thou e'er scal'd the city's rampir'd wall,
Or hurl'd the missile dart, or learn'd to poise
The warrior's deathful spear ? The use of targe,
Of helm and buckler is to thee unknown.

D A V I D.

Arms I have seldom seen. I little know
Of war's proud discipline. The trumpet's clang,
The shock of charging hosts, the rampir'd wall,
Th' embattled phalanx, and the warrior spear,
The use of targe and helm to me is new.
My zeal for God, my patriot love of Israel,
And reverence for my king—these are my claims.

S A U L.

But, gentle youth, thou hast no fame in arms ;
Renown, with her shrill clarion, never bore
Thy honour'd name to many a land remote,
From the fair regions, where Euphrates laves
Assyria's borders, to the distant Nile.

DAVID AND GOLIATH :

D A V I D.

True, mighty king ! I am indeed alike
 Unblest'd by Fortune, and to Fame unknown ;
 A lowly shepherd-swain of Judah's tribe.
 But greatness ever springs from low beginnings.
 That very Nile thou mention'st, whose broad stream
 Bears fruitfulness and health thro' many a clime,
 From an unknown, penurious, scanty source,
 Took its first rise. The forest oak, which shades
 Thy sultry troops in many a toilsome march,
 Once an unheeded acorn lay. O king !
 Who ne'er begins, can never ought achieve
 Of glorious. Thou thyself wast once unknown,
 Till fair occasion brought thy worth to light.
 Sublimar views inspire my youthful heart,
 Than human praise : I seek to vindicate
 Th' insulted honour of the God thou serv'st.

A B N E R.

'Tis nobly said.

S A U L.

I love thy spirit, youth !
 But dare not trust thy inexperience'd arm
 Against a giant's might. The sight of blood,
 Tho' brave thou feel'st when peril is not nigh,
 Will pale thy ardent cheek.

D A V I D.

Not so, O king !
 This youthful arm has been imbru'd in blood ;
 Tho' yet no blood of man has ever stain'd it.
 Thy servant's occupation is a shepherd :
 With jealous care I watch'd my father's flock :
 A brindled lion and a furious bear
 Forth from the thicket rush'd upon the fold,
 Seiz'd a young lamb, and tore their bleating spoil ;
 Urg'd by compassion for my helpless charge,

I felt a new-born vigour nerve my arm,
 And, eager, on the foaming monsters rush'd.
 The famish'd lion by his grisly beard,
 Enrag'd, I caught, and smote him to the ground;
 The panting monster struggling in my gripe,
 Shook terribly his bristling mane, and lash'd
 His own gaunt, goary sides; fiercely he ground
 His gnashing teeth, and roll'd his starting eyes,
 Bloodshot with agony; then, with a groan
 That wak'd the echoes of the mountain, died.
 Nor did his grim associate 'scape my arm;
 Thy servant slew the lion and the bear;
 I kill'd them both, and bore their shaggy spoils
 In triumph home. And shall I fear to meet
 Th' uncircumcis'd Philistine? No: that God
 Who sav'd me from the bear's destructive fang,
 And hungry lion's jaw, will not he save me
 From this idolater?

S A U L.

He will, he will!
 Go, noble youth! be valiant, and be blest'd!
 The God thou serv'at will shield thee in the fight,
 And nerve thy arm with more than mortal strength.

A B N E R.

So the bold Nazarite* a lion slew,
 An earnest of his victories o'er Philistia.

S A U L.

Go, Abner! see the youth be well equipp'd
 With shield and spear. Be it thy care to grace him
 With all the fit accoutrements of war.
 The choicest mail from my rich armoury take,
 And gird upon his thigh my own try'd sword,
 Of noblest temper'd steel.

* Samson. See Judges, chap. xiv.

DAVID AND GOLIATH :

ABNER.

I shall obey.

DAVID.

Pardon, O king ! the coat of plaited mail,
 These limbs have never known ; it would not shield,
 'Twould but encumber one, who never felt
 The weight of armour.

SAUL.

Take thy wish, my son.

Thy sword then, and the God of Jacob guard thee !

 PART IV.

SCENE, another Part of the Camp.

DAVID.

ETERNAL Justice ! in whose awful scale
 Th' event of battle hangs ! Eternal Mercy,
 Whose universal beam illumines all !
 If by thy attributes I may, unblam'd,
 Address thee ; Lord of glory, hear me now !
 O teach these hands to war, these arms to fight !
 Thou ever present help in time of need !
 Let thy broad mercy, as a shield, defend,
 And let thine everlasting arms support me !
 Then, though the heathen rage, I shall not fear.
 JEHOVAH ! be my buckler. Mighty LORD !
 Thou, who hast deign'd by humble instruments
 To manifest the marvels of thy might,
 Be present with me now ! 'tis thy own cause !
 Thy wisdom will foresee, thy goodness choose,
 And thy omnipotence will execute
 Thy high designs, though by a feeble arm !

I feel a secret impulse drive me on,
 And my soul springs impatient for the fight.
 'Tis not the heated spirits, or warm blood
 Of sanguine youth; and yet I pant, I burn
 To meet th' insulting foe. I thirst for glory;
 Yet not the fading glory of renown,
 The perishable praise of mortal man.

DAVID, ELIAB, ISRAELITES.

ELIAB.

What do I hear, thou truant? thou hast dar'd,
 Ev'n to the awful presence of the king,
 Bear thy presumption!

DAVID.

He, who fears the LORD,
 Shall boldly stand before the face of kings,
 And shall not be ashamed.

ELIAB.

But what wild dream
 Has urg'd thee to this deed of desp'rate rashness?
 Thou mean'st, so have I learn'd, to meet Goliath,
 His single arm to thine.

DAVID.

'Tis what I mean,
 Ev'n on this spot; each moment I expect
 His wish'd approach.

ELIAB.

Go home; return, for shame!
 Nor madly pull destruction on thy head.
 Thy doating father, when thy shepherd's coat,
 Drench'd in thy blood is brought him, will lament,
 And rend his furrow'd cheek, and silver hair,
 As if some mighty loss had touch'd his age;

DAVID AND GOLIATH :

And mourn, even as the partial patriarch mourn'd,
 When Joseph's bloody garment he receiv'd,
 From his less dear, not less deserving, sons.
 But whence that glitt'ring ornament, which hangs
 Useless upon thy thigh?

DAVID.

'Tis the king's gift.

But thou art right; it suits not me, my brother.
 Nor sword I mean to wear, nor spear to poize,
 Lest men should say I put my trust in aught
 Save an eternal shield.

ELIAB.

Then thou indeed

Art bent to seek thy death.

DAVID.

And what is death?

Is it so terrible to die, my brother?
 Or, grant it terrible; say, is it not
 Inevitable too? If, by eluding death,
 When some high duty calls us forth to die,
 We could for ever shun it, and escape
 The universal lot; then fond self-love,
 Then human prudence, boldly might produce
 Their fine-spun arguments, their learn'd harangues,
 Their cobweb arts, their phrase sophistical,
 Their subtle doubts, and all the specious tricks
 Of eloquent cunning lab'ring for its end.
 But since, howe'er protracted, death will come,
 Why fondly study, with ingenious pains,
 To put it off?—To breathe a little longer,
 Is to defer our fate, but not to shun it:
 Small gain! which Wisdom with indiff'rent eye
 Beholds. Why wish to drink the bitter dregs
 Of life's exhausted chalice, whose last runnings,
 Ev'n at the best, are vapid? Why not die,

(If Heav'n so will) in manhood's op'ning bloom,
 When all the flush of life is gay about us,
 When sprightly youth, with many a new-born joy,
 Solicits every sense? So may we then
 Present a sacrifice, unmeet, indeed,
 (Ah, how unmeet!) but more acceptable
 Than the world's leavings; than a worn-out heart,
 By vice enfeebled, and by vain desires
 Sunk and exhausted!

ELIAB.

Hark! I hear a sound
 Of multitudes approaching!

DAVID.

'Tis the giant!
 I see him not, but hear his measur'd space.

ELIAB.

Look, where his pond'rous shield is borne before him!

DAVID.

Like a broad moon its ample disk protends.
 But soft—what unknown prodigy appears?
 A moving mountain cas'd in polish'd brass!

ELIAB. [*Getting behind DAVID.*]

How's this? thou dost not tremble. Thy firm joints
 Betray no fear: Thy accents are not broken:
 Thy cheek retains its red, thine eye its lustre.
 He comes more near: Dost thou not fear him now?

DAVID.

No.

The vast colossal statue nor inspires
 Respect nor fear. Mere magnitude of form,
 Without proportion'd intellect and valour,
 Strikes not my soul with reverence nor with awe.

ELIAB.

Near, and more near, he comes. I hold it rash
 To stay so near him, and expose a life
 Which may hereafter serve the state. Farewell !

[Exit.

[GOLIATH advances, clad in complete armour. One bearing his shield precedes him. The opposing armies are seen at a distance, drawn up on each side of the valley. GOLIATH begins to speak, before he comes on. DAVID stands in the same place, with an air of indifference.]

GOLIATH.

Where is the mighty man of war, who dares
 Accept the challenge of Philistia's chief ?
 What victor-king, what gen'ral drench'd in blood,
 Claims this high privilege ? What are his rights ?
 What proud credentials does the boaster bring,
 To prove his claim ? What cities laid in ashes ?
 What ruin'd provinces ? What slaughter'd realms ?
 What heads of heroes, and what hearts of kings,
 In battle kill'd, or at his altars slain,
 Has he to boast ? Is his bright armoury
 Thick set with spears, and swords, and coats of mail,
 Of vanquish'd nations, by his single arm
 Subdu'd ? Where is the mortal man so bold,
 So much a wretch, so out of love with life,
 To dare the weight of this uplifted spear,
 Which never fell innoxious ? Yet, I swear,
 I grudge the glory to his parting soul
 To fall by this right hand. 'Twill sweeten death,
 To know he had the honour to contend
 With the dread son of Anak. Latest time
 From blank oblivion shall retrieve his name,
 Who dar'd to perish in unequal fight
 With Gath's triumphant champion. Come, advance !
 Philistia's gods to Israel's. Sound, my herald—
 Sound for the battle straight !

[Herald sounds the trumpet.

DAVID.

Behold thy foe !

GOLIATH.

I see him not.

DAVID.

Behold him here !

GOLIATH.

Say, where ?

Direct my fight. I do not war with boys.

DAVID.

I stand prepar'd, thy single arm to mine.

GOLIATH.

Why, this is mockery, minion ! it may chance
 To cost thee dear. Sport not with things above thee ;
 But tell me who, of all this num'rous host,
 Expects his death from me ? Which is the man,
 Whom Israel sends to meet my bold defiance ?

DAVID.

Th' election of my sov'reign falls on me.

GOLIATH.

On thee ! on thee ! by Dagon, 'tis too much !
 Thou curled minion ! thou a nation's champion !
 'Twould move my mirth at any other time ;
 But trifling's out of tune. Begone, light boy !
 And tempt me not too far.

DAVID.

I do defy thee,
 Thou foul idolater ! Hast thou not scorn'd
 The armies of the living God I serve ?
 By me he will avenge upon thy head

Thy nation's sins and thine. Arm'd with his name,
Unshrinking, I dare meet the stoutest foe
That ever bath'd his hostile spear in blood.

GOLIATH, *ironically.*

Indeed ! 'tis wond'rous well ! Now, by my gods,
The stripping plays the orator ! Vain boy !
Keep close to that same bloodless war of words,
And thou shalt still be safe. Tongue-valiant warrior !
Where is thy sylvan crook, with garlands hung,
Of idle field-flowers ? Where thy wanton harp,
Thou dainty-finger'd hero ? better strike
Its notes lascivious, or the lulling lute
Touch softly, than provoke the trumpet's rage.
I will not stain the honour of my spear
With thy inglorious blood. Shall that fair cheek
Be fear'd with wounds unseemly ? Rather go,
And hold fond dalliance with the Syrian maids ;
To wanton measures dance ; and let them braid
The bright luxuriance of thy golden hair :
They for their lost Adonis may mistake
Thy dainty form.

DAVID.

Peace, thou unhallow'd railer !
O tell it not in Gath, nor let the sound
Reach Askelon, how once your slaughter'd lords,
By mighty Sampson* found one common grave :
When his broad shoulder the firm pillars heav'd,
And to its base the tottering fabric shook.

GOLIATH.

Insulting boy ! perhaps thou hast not heard
The infamy of that inglorious day,
When your weak hosts at Ebenezer† pitch'd
Their quick-abandon'd tents ! Then, when your ark,
Your talisman, your charm, your boasted pledge

* Judges, chap. xvi. † 1 Samuel, chap. v.

Of safety and success, was tamely lost !
 And yet not tamely, since by me 'twas won.
 When with this good right-arm I thinn'd your ranks,
 And bravely crush'd, beneath a single blow,
 The chosen guardians of this vaunted shrine,
 Hophni and Phineas.* The fam'd ark itself
 I bore to Ashdod.

DAVID.

I remember too,
 Since thou provok'st th' unwelcome truth, how all
 Your blushing priests beheld their idol's shame ;
 When prostrate Dagon fell before the ark,
 And your frail god was shiver'd. Then Philistia,
 Idolatrous Philistia flew for succour
 To Israel's help, and all her smitten nobles
 Confess'd the LORD was GOD, and the bless'd ark,
 Gladly, with reverential awe restor'd !

GOLIATH.

By Ashdod's fane thou ly'st. Now will I meet thee,
 Thou insect warrior ! since thou dar'st me thus !
 Already I behold thy mangled limbs,
 Dissever'd each from each, ere long to feed
 The fierce, blood-snuffing vulture. Mark me well !
 Around my spear I'll twist thy shining locks,
 And toss in air thy head all gash'd with wounds ;
 Thy lips, yet quiv'ring with the dire convulsion
 Of recent death ! Art thou not terrified ?

DAVID.

No.

True courage is not mov'd by breath of words.
 But the rash bravery of boiling blood,
 Impetuous, knows no settled principle.

* Commentators say, that the Chaldee Paraphrase makes Goliath boast, that he had killed Hophni and Phineas, and taken the ark prisoner.

A fev'rish tide, it has its ebbs and flows,
 As spirits rise or fall, as wine inflames,
 Or circumstances change. But inborn courage,
 The gen'rous child of Fortitude and Faith,
 Holds its firm empire in the constant soul ;
 And, like the stedfast pole-star, never once
 From the same fix'd and faithful point declines.

GOLIATH.

The curses of Philistia's gods be on thee !
 This fine-drawn speech is meant to lengthen out
 That little life thy words pretend toicorn.

DAVID.

Ha ! say'st thou so ? Come on, then ! Mark us well.
 Thou com'st to me with sword, and spear, and shield !
 In the dread name of Israel's God, I come ;
 The living LORD of Hosts, whom thou defy'st !
 Yet though no shield I bring, no arms, except
 These five smooth stones I gather'd from the brook,
 With such a simple sling as shepherds use ;
 Yet, all expos'd, defenceless as I am,
 The God I serve shall give thee up a prey
 To my victorious arm. This day, I mean
 To make th' uncircumcised tribes confess
 There is a God in Israel. I will give thee,
 Spite of thy vaunted strength and giant bulk,
 To glut the carrion kites. Nor thee alone ;
 The mangled carcasses of your thick hosts
 Shall spread the plains of Elah : till Philistia,
 'Thro' all her trembling tents and flying bands,
 Shall own that Judah's God is God indeed !
 I dare thee to the trial !

GOLIATH.

Follow me.

In this good spear I trust.

DAVID.

I trust in Heaven !

The God of battles stimulates my arm,
And fires my soul with ardour, not its own.

 PART V.

SCENE, the Tent of SAUL.

SAUL, *rising from his Couch.*

OH ! that I knew the black and midnight arts
Of wizard forcery ! that I could call
The slumb'ring spirit from the shades of hell !
Or, like Chaldean fages, could foreknow
Th' event of things unacted ! I might then
Anticipate my fortune. How am I fall'n !
The sport of vain chimeras, the weak slave
Of Fear, and sickly Fancy ; coveting
To know the arts, which foul diviners use.
Thick blood, and moping melancholy, lead
To baleful Superstition ; that fell fiend,
Whose with'ring charms blast the fair bloom of virtue.
Why did my wounded pride with scorn reject
The wholesome truths which holy Samuel told me ?
Why drive him from my presence ? He might now
Raise my sunk soul, and my benighted mind
Enlighten with religion's cheering ray.
He dar'd to menace me with loss of empire ;
And I, for that bold honesty, dismiss'd him.
" Another shall possess thy throne," he cry'd,
" A stranger !" This unwelcome prophecy
Has lin'd my crown, and strew'd my couch with thorns.
Each ray of op'ning merit I discern
In friend or foe, distracts my troubled soul,

Left he should prove my rival. But this morn,
 Ev'n my young champion, lovely as he look'd
 In blooming valour, struck me to the soul
 With Jealousy's barb'd dart. O Jealousy!
 'Thou ugliest fiend of hell! thy deadly venom
 Preys on my vitals, turns the healthful hue
 Of my fresh cheek to haggard fallowness,
 And drinks my spirit up!

[*A flourish of trumpets, shouting, &c. &c.*
 What sounds are those?

The combat is decided. Hark! again,
 'Those shouts proclaim it! Now, O God of Jacob,
 If yet thou hast not quite withdrawn from Saul
 Thy light and favour, prosper me this once!
 But Abner comes! I dread to hear his tale.
 Fair Hope, with smiling face, but ling'ring foot,
 Has long deceiv'd me.

ABNER.

King of Israel, hail!
 Now thou art king indeed. The youth has conquer'd:
 Goliath's dead.

SAUL.

Oh, speak thy tale again,
 Lest my fond ears deceive me!

ABNER.

Thy young champion
 Has slain the giant.

SAUL.

Then God is gracious still,
 In spite of my offences! But, good Abner,
 How was it? tell me all! Where is my champion?
 Quick let me press him to my grateful heart,
 And pay him a king's thanks. And yet, who knows?
 This forward friend may prove an active foe.

No more of that.—Tell me the whole, brave Abner !
And paint the glorious acts of my young hero !

A B N E R.

Full in the centre of the camp they stood ;
Th' opposing armies rang'd on either side,
In proud array. The haughty giant stalk'd,
Stately, across the valley. Next the youth,
With modest confidence advanc'd. Nor pomp,
Nor gay parade, nor martial ornament,
His graceful form adorn'd. Goliath straight,
With solemn state, began the busy work
Of dreadful preparation. In one place
His closely jointed mail an opening left
For air, and only one : the watchful youth
Mark'd that the beaver of his helm was up.
Meanwhile the giant such a blow devis'd,
As would have crush'd him ; this the youth perceiv'd,
And from his well-directed sling, he hurl'd,
With dext'rous aim, a stone, which sunk, deep lodg'd,
In the capacious forehead of the foe.
'Then, with a cry as loud and terrible
As Lybian lions roaring for their young,
Quite stunn'd, the furious Giant stagger'd, reel'd,
And fell : the mighty mass of man fell prone.
With its own weight his shatter'd bulk was bruise'd.
His clattering arms rung dreadful through the field,
And the firm basis of the solid earth
Shook. Chok'd with blood and dust, he curs'd his gods,
And dy'd blaspheming ! Straight the victor youth
Drew from its sheath the giant's ponderous sword,
And from th' enormous trunk, the goary head,
Furious in death, he sever'd. The grim visage
Look'd threat'ning still, and still frown'd horribly.

S A U L.

O glorious deed ! O valiant conqueror !

G

ABNER.

The youth so calm appear'd, so nobly firm ;
 So cool, yet so intrepid ; that these eyes
 Ne'er saw such temperate valour, so chafis'd
 By modesty.

SAUL.

Thou dwell'st upon his praise
 With needless circumstance. 'Twas nobly done ;
 But others too have fought.

ABNER.

None, none so bravely.

SAUL.

What follow'd next ?

ABNER.

The shouting Israelites
 On the Philistines rush'd, and still pursue
 Their routed remnants. In dismay, their bands
 Disorder'd fly. While shouts of loud acclaim
 Pursue their brave deliverer. Lo, he comes !
 Bearing the Giant's head, and shining sword,
 His well-earn'd trophies.

SAUL, ABNER, DAVID.

[DAVID, bearing GOLIATH's head and sword. He kneels,
 and lays both at SAUL's feet.]

SAUL.

Welcome to my heart,
 My glorious champion ! my deliverer, welcome !
 How shall I speak the swelling gratitude
 Of my full heart ? or give thee the high praise
 Thy gallant deeds deserve ?

DAVID.

O mighty king !
 Sweet is the breath of praise, when giv'n by those

A SACRED DRAMA.

Whose own high merit claims the praise they give.
But let not this one fortunate event,
By Heav'n directed, be ascrib'd to me.
I might have fought with equal skill and courage,
And not have gain'd this conquest; then had shame,
Harsh obloquy, and foul disgrace befall'n me.
But prosp'rous fortune gains the praise of valour.

SAUL.

I like not this. In every thing superior!
He soars above me. (*Aside.*) Modest youth, thou'rt right.
And fortune, as thou say'st, deserves the praise
We give to human valour.

DAVID.

The God of Hosts deserves it. Rather say,

SAUL.

Tell me, youth!
What is thy name, and what thy father's house?

DAVID.

My name is David, Jesse is my sire,
An humble Bethlehemite of Judah's tribe.

SAUL.

David, the son of Jesse! Sure that name
Has been familiar to me! Nay, thy voice,
Thy form and features, I remember too,
Though faint, and indistinctly.

ABNER.

In this Hero
Behold thy sweet musician; he, whose harp
Expell'd the melancholy fiend, whose pow'r
Enslav'd thy spirit.

DAVID AND GOLIATH :

SAUL.

This the modest youth,

Whom, for his skill and virtues, I preferr'd
To bear my armour ?

DAVID.

I am he, O king !

SAUL.

Why this concealment ? tell me, valiant David !
Why didst thou hide thy birth and name till now ?

DAVID.

O king ! I would not aught from favour claim,
Or on remember'd services presume :
But on the strength of my own actions stand,
Ungrac'd and unsupported.

ABNER.

Well he merits
The honours which await him. Why, O king !
Dost thou delay to bless his doubting heart
With his well earn'd rewards ? Thy lovely daughter,
By right of conquest his !

SAUL, to DAVID.

True—thou hast won her.
She shall be thine—Yes, a king's word is past.

DAVID.

O boundless blessing ! What, shall she be mine,
For whom contending monarchs might renounce
Their slighted crowns ?

[*Sounds of musical instruments heard at a distance.
Shouting and singing. A grand procession. CHO-
RUS of HEBREW WOMEN.*]

SAUL.

How's this ? what sounds of joy
Salute my ears ? what means this pageantry ?

This merry sound of tabret and of harp ?
 What mean these idle instruments of triumph ?
 These women, who in fair procession move,
 Making sweet melody ?

ABNER.

To pay due honour
 To David, are they come.

S A U L.

A rival's praise
 Is discord to the ear of jealousy !

[*Martial symphony. After which* CHORUS of Wo-
 MEN *sing.*]

I.

PREPARE ! your festal rites prepare !
 Let your triumphs rend the air !
 Idol gods shall reign no more,
 We the living Lord adore !
 Let heathen hosts on human helps repose,
 Since Israel's God has routed Israel's foes.

II.

Let remotest nations know,
 Proud Goliath's overthrow :
 Fall'n, Philistia ! is thy trust,
 Dagon's honour laid in dust !
 Who fears the LORD of Glory, need not fear
 The brazen armour, or the lifted spear.

III.

See the routed squadrons fly !
 Hark ! their clamours rend the sky ;
 Blood and carnage stain the field !
 See, the vanquish'd nations yield !

Dismay and terror fill the frighten'd land ;
While conqu'ring David routs the trembling band.

IV.

Lo ! upon the tented field,
Royal Saul has thousands kill'd !
Lo ! upon th' ensanguin'd plain,
David has ten thousands slain !
Let mighty Saul his vanquish'd thousands tell,
While tenfold triumphs David's victories swell.

THE END.



Persons of the Drama.

BELSHAZZAR, King of Babylon.

NITOCRIS, the Queen-mother.

COURTIERS, ASTROLOGERS, PARASITES.

DANIEL, the JEWISH Prophet.

Captive JEWS, &c. &c.

SCENE, BABYLON. Time, Night.

☞ The Subject of this Drama is taken from the Fifth Chapter of the Prophet DANIEL.

Belshazzar :

A

SACRED DRAMA.

PART I.

How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, Son of the Morning !
How art thou cut down to the ground, who didst weaken the na-
tions !

ISAIAH.

SCENE, near the Palace of BABYLON.

DANIEL, *and captive* JEWS.

DANIEL.

PARENT of life and light ! sole Source of good !
Whose tender mercies through the tide of time,
In long successive order, have sustain'd,
And fav'd the sons of Israel ! Thou, whose pow'r
Deliver'd righteous Noah from the flood,
The whelming flood, the grave of human kind !
Oh Thou ! whose guardian care, and out-stretched hand,
Rescu'd young Isaac from the lifted arm,
Rais'd, at thy bidding, to devote a son,
An only son, doom'd by his fire to die.
(Oh, saving Faith, by such obedience prov'd !
Oh, blest Obedience, hallow'd thus by faith !)
Thou, who in mercy fav'dst the chosen race,
In the wild desert ; and didst there sustain them,
By wonder-working love, though they rebell'd
And murmur'd at the miracles that fav'd them !
Oh ! hear thy servant Daniel ! hear, and help.
Thou ! whose almighty pow'r did after raise
Successive leaders to defend our race :

Who sentest valiant Joshua to the field,
 Thy people's champion, to the conqu'ring field ;
 Where the revolving planet of the night,
 Suspended in her radiant round, was stay'd ;
 And the bright sun, arrested in his course,
 Stupendously stood still !

CHORUS of JEWS.

I.

What aileth thee, that thou stood'st still ;
 O sun ! nor did thy flaming orb decline ?
 And thou, O moon ! in Ajalon's dark vale,
 Why didst thou long beyond thy period shine ?

II.

Was it at Joshua's dread command,
 The leader of the Israelitish band ?
 Yes——at a mortal bidding both stood still ;
 'Twas Joshua's word, but 'twas JEHOVAH's will.

III.

What all-controlling hand had force
 To stop eternal Nature's constant course ?
 'The wand'ring moon to one fix'd spot confine,
 But He, whose fiat bade the planets shine ?

DANIEL.

O Thou ! who, when thy discontented host,
 Tir'd of JEHOVAH's rule, desir'd a king,
 In anger gav'st them Saul ; and then again
 Didst wrest the regal sceptre from his hand,
 To give it David—David, best lov'd !
 Illustrious David ! Poet, prophet, king !
 'Thou, who didst suffer Solomon his son
 'To build a glorious temple to thy name !
 Oh hear thy servants, and forgive them too,
 If, by severe necessity compell'd,
 We worship here——We have no temple now ;
 Altar or sanctuary, none is left.

CHORUS of J E W S.

○ Judah ! let thy captive sons deplore,
Thy far-fam'd temple's now no more !
Fall'n is thy sacred fane, thy glory gone,
Fall'n is thy temple, Solomon.

Ne'er did Barbaric kings behold,
With all their shining gems, their burnish'd gold,
A fane so perfect, bright and fair ;
For God himself was wont t' inhabit there :
Between the Cherubim his glory stood,
While the high-priest alone the dazzling splendor view'd.

How fondly did the Tyrian artist strive,
His name to latest time should live !
Such wealth the stranger wonder'd to behold :
Gold were the tablets, and the vases gold.
Of cedar such an ample store,
Exhausted Lebanon could yield no more.

Bending before the Ruler of the sky,
Well might the royal founder cry,
Fill'd with an holy dread, a rev'rend fear,
Will God in very deed inhabit here ?
The heav'n of heav'ns beneath his feet,
Is for the bright inhabitant unmeet :
Archangels prostrate wait his high commands,
And will he deign to dwell in temples made with hands ?

D A N I E L.

Yes, thou art ever present, Pow'r supreme !
Not circumscrib'd by time, nor fix'd to space,
Confin'd to altars, nor to temples bound,
In wealth, in want, in freedom, or in chains,
In dungeons, or on thrones, the faithful find thee !
Ev'n in the burning cauldron thou wast near
To Shadrach and the holy brotherhood ;
The unhurt martyrs blest'd thee in the flames ;
They fought, and found thee, call'd, and thou wast there.

First J E W.

How chang'd our state ! Judah ! thy glory's fall'n ;
 Thy joys for hard captivity exchange'd ;
 And thy sad sons breathe the polluted air
 Of Babylon, where deities obscene
 Insult the living God ; and to his servants,
 The priests of wretched idols, made with hands,
 Shew contumelious scorn.

DANIEL.

'Tis Heaven's high will.

Second J E W.

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem !
 If I not fondly cherish thy lov'd image,
 Ev'n in the giddy hour of thoughtless mirth ;
 If I not rather view thy prostrate walls
 Than haughty Babylon's imperial tow'rs ;
 Then may my tongue refuse to frame the strains
 Of sweetest harmony ; my rude right hand
 Forget, with sounds symphonious, to accord
 The harp of Jesse's son to Sion's songs.

First J E W.

Oft, on Euphrates' ever verdant banks,
 Where drooping willows form a mournful shade ;
 With all the pride which prosp'rous fortunes give,
 And all th' unfeeling mirth of happy men,
 Th' insulting Babylonians ask a song ;
 Such songs as erst, in better days, were sung
 By Korah's sons, or heav'n-taught Asaph set
 To loftiest measures ; then our bursting hearts
 Feel all their woes afresh ; the galling chain
 Of bondage crushes then the free-born soul
 With wringing anguish ; from the trembling lip
 Th' unfinish'd cadence falls, and the big tear,
 While it relieves, betrays the woe-fraught soul.
 For who can view Euphrates' pleasant stream,
 Its drooping willows, and its verdant banks,

And not to wounded memory recal
 The piny groves of fertile Palestine,
 The vales of Solyma, and Jordan's stream ?

DANIEL.

Firm faith, and deep submission to high Heav'n,
 Will teach us to endure, without a murmur,
 What seems so hard. Think what the holy host
 Of patriarchs, saints, and prophets, have sustain'd
 In the blest cause of Truth ! And shall not we,
 O men of Judah ! dare what these have dar'd,
 And boldly pass through the refining fire
 Of fierce affliction ? Yes, be witness, Heav'n !
 Old as I am, I will not shrink at death,
 Come in what shape it may, if God so will
 By peril to confirm and prove my faith.
 Oh ! I would dare yon den of hungry lions,
 Rather than pause to fill the task assign'd
 By Wisdom infinite. Nor think I boast ;
 Not in myself, but in thy strength I trust,
 Spirit of God !

First J E W.

Prophet ! thy words support,
 And raise our sinking souls.

DANIEL.

Behold yon palace,
 Where proud Belsazzar keeps his wanton courts !
 I knew it once beneath another lord,
 His grandsire,* who subdu'd Jehoiachin,
 And hither brought sad Judah's captive tribes ;
 Together with the rich and sacred relics
 Of our fam'd temple ; all the holy treasure,
 The golden vases, and the sacred cups,
 Which graced, in happier times, the sanctuary.

* Nebuchadnezzar.

Second JEW.

May HE, to whose blest use they were devoted,
Preserve them from pollution ; and once more,
In his own gracious time, restore the temple !

DANIEL.

I, with some favour'd youths of Jewish race,
Was lodg'd in his own palace, and instructed
In all the various learning of the east :
But HE, on whose great name our fathers call'd,
Preserv'd us from the perils of a court ;
And warn'd us to avoid the tempting cates
Pernicious lux'ry offer'd to our taste.
Fell luxury ! more perilous to youth
Than storms or quicksands, poverty or chains.

Second JEW.

He, who can guard 'gainst the low baits of sense,
Will find Temptation's arrows hurtless strike
Against the brazen shield of Temperance.
For 'tis th' inferior appetites enthrall
'The man, and quench th' immortal light within him ;
The senses take the soul an easy prey,
And sink th' imprison'd spirit into brute.

DANIEL.

Twice,* by the Spirit of God, did I expound
The visions of the king ; his soul was touch'd,
And twice did he repent, and prostrate fall
Before the God of Daniel : yet again,
Pow'r, flatt'ry, and prosperity, undid him.
When, from the lofty ramparts of his palace,
He view'd the splendors of the royal city,
'That magazine of wealth, which proud Euphrates
Wafts from each distant corner of the earth ;
When he beheld the adamantine tow'rs,
The brazen gates, the bulwarks of his strength,
The pendent gardens, art's stupendous work,

* Daniel, chap. ii. and iv.

The wonder of the world !—the proud Chaldean,
Mad with the insolence of boundless wealth,
And pow'r supreme, conceiv'd himself a God.
“ This mighty Babylon is mine,” he cry'd,
“ My wondrous pow'r, *my* godlike arm achiev'd it.
“ I scorn submission, own no deity
“ Above my own.”—While the blasphemer spoke,
The wrath of Heav'n inflicted instant vengeance ;
Stripp'd him of that bright reason he abus'd,
And drove him from the cheerful haunts of men,
A naked, wretched, helpless, senseless thing ;
Companion of the brutes, his equals now.

First J E W.

Nor does his impious grandson, proud Belshazzar,
Fall short of his offences ; nay, he wants
The valiant spirit, and the active soul,
Of his progenitor : for Pleasure's slave,
Though bound in flow'ry fetters, silky-soft,
Is more subdu'd than is the casual victim
Of furious rage and violent ambition.
Ambition is a fierce, but short-liv'd fire ;
But Pleasure with a constant flame consumes.
War slays her thousands ; but destructive Pleasure,
More fell, more fatal, her ten thousands slays :
The young, luxurious king she fondly woos
In every shape of am'rous blandishment ;
With adulation smooth ensnares his soul,
With love betrays him, and with wine inflames :
She strews her magic poppies o'er his couch ;
And with delicious opiates charms him down,
In fatal slumbers bound. Though Babylon
Is now invested by the warlike troops
Of the young Cyrus, Persia's valiant prince ;
Who, in conjunction with the Median king,
Darius, fam'd for conquest, now prepares
To storm the city : not the impending horrors
Which ever wait a siege, have power to wake
To thought, or sense, th' intoxicated king.

DANIEL.

Ev'n in this night of universal dread,
 A mighty army threat'ning at the gates !
 This very night, as if in scorn of danger,
 The dissolute Belshazzar holds a feast
 Magnificently impious, meant to honour
 Belus, the fav'rite Babylonish idol.
 Lewd parasites compose his wanton court,
 Whose impious flatteries sooth his monstrous crimes :
 They justify his vices, and extol
 His boastful phrase, as if he were some god.
 Whate'er he says, they say ; what he commands,
 Implicitly they do ; they echo back
 His blasphemies, with shouts of loud acclaim ;
 And when he wounds the tortur'd ear of Virtue,
 They cry, All hail ; Belshazzar, live for ever !
 To-night a thousand nobles fill his hall,
 Princes, and all the dames who grace the court ;
 All but the virtuous queen, sage Neeris ;
 Ah ! how unlike the impious king her son !
 She never mingles in the midnight fray,
 Nor crowns the guilty banquet with her presence.
 The royal fair is rich in every virtue,
 Which can adorn the queen, or grace the woman.
 But for the wisdom of her prudent counsels
 This wretched empire had been long undone.
 Not fam'd Semiramis, Assyria's pride,
 Could boast a brighter mind, or firmer soul ;
 Beneath the gentle reign of Merodach,*
 Her royal lord, our nation tasted peace.
 Our captive monarch, sad Jehoiachin,
 Crown grey in a close prison's horrid gloom,
 He freed from bondage ; brought the hoary king
 To taste once more the long-forgotten sweets
 Of precious liberty, and cheerful light ;
 Pour'd in his wounds the lenient balm of kindness,
 And bless'd his setting hour of life with peace.

[Sound of trumpets is heard at a distance.]

* 2 Kings, chap. xxv.

First J E W.

That sound proclaims the banquet is begun.

Second J E W.

Hark ! the licentious uproar grows more loud.
The vaulted roof resounds with shouts of mirth,
And the firm palace shakes ! Retire, my friends ;
This madness is not meet for sober ears.
If any of our race were found so near,
’Twould but expose us to the rude attack
Of ribaldry obscene, and impious jests,
From these mad sons of Belial, now inflam’d
To deeds of riot from the wanton feast.

D A N I E L.

Here part we then ! but when again to meet,
Who knows, save Heav’n ? Yet, oh, my friends ! I feel
An impulse more than human stir my breast.
Rapt in prophetic vision,* I behold
Things hid as yet from mortal sight. I see
The dart of vengeance tremble in the air,
Ere long to pierce the impious king. Ev’n now
The fierce, destroying angel stalks abroad,
And brandishes aloft the two-edg’d sword
Of retribution keen ; he soon will strike,
And Babylon shall weep as Sion wept.
Pass but a little while, and you shall see
This queen of cities prostrate on the earth.
This haughty mistress of the kneeling world,
How shall she sit dishonour’d in the dust,
In tarnish’d pomp and solitary woe !
How shall she shroud her glories in the dark,
And in opprobrious silence hide her head !
Lament, O virgin daughter of Chaldea !
For thou shalt fall, imperial queen ! shalt fall.
No more Sidonian robes shall grace thy limbs.
To purple garments, sackcloth shall succeed ;

* See the Prophecies of Isaiah, chap. xlvii. and others.

And fordid dust and ashes shall supply
 The od'rous nard and cassia. Thou, who saidst,
 I am, and there is none beside me : thou,
 Ev'n thou, imperial Babylon ! shalt fall :
 Thy glory quite eclips'd ! The pleasant sound
 Of viol, and of harp, shall charm no more ;
 Nor song of Syrian damsels shall be heard,
 Responsive to the lute's luxurious note :
 But the loud bittern's cry, the raven's croak,
 The bat's fell scream, the lonely owl's dull plaint,
 And every hideous bird with ominous shriek,
 Shall scare affrighted Silence from thy walls.
 While DESOLATION, snatching from the hand
 Of time the scythe of ruin, sits aloft,
 In dreadful majesty and horrid pomp ;
 Glancing with fullen pride thy crumbling tow'rs,
 Thy broken battlements, thy columns fall'n :
 Then, pointing to the mischiefs she has made,
 The fiend exclaims, This once was Babylon !

PART II.

SCENE, *The Court of BELSHAZZAR. The King seated on a magnificent throne. Princes, Nobles, and Attendants. Ladies of the Court. Music.—A superb Banquet.*

First COURTIER. *Rises, and kneels.*

HAIL, mighty king !

Second COURTIER.

Belshazzar, live for ever !

Third COURTIER.

Sun of the world, and light of kings, all hail !

Fourth COURTIER.

With lowest reverence, such as best becomes
 The humblest creatures of imperial pow'r,
 Behold a thousand nobles bend before thee !
 Princes far fam'd, and dames of high descent :
 Yet all this pride of wealth, this boast of beauty,
 Shrinks into nought before thine awful eye ;
 And lives, or dies, as the king frowns or smiles !

BELSHAZZAR.

This is such homage as becomes your love ;
 And suits the mighty monarch of mankind.

Fifth COURTIER.

The bending world should prostrate thus before thee ;
 And pay, not only praise, but adoration !

BELSHAZZAR. *Rises, and comes forward.*

Let dull philosophy preach self-denial ;
 Let envious poverty, and snarling age,
 Proudly declaim against the joys they know not.
 Let the deluded Jews, who fondly hope
 Some fancy'd heav'n hereafter, mortify ;
 And lose the actual blessings of this world,
 To purchase others, which may never come.
Our gods may promise less, but give us more.
 Ill could my ardent spirit be content
 With meagre abstinence, and hungry hope.
 Let those misjudging Israelites, who want
 The nimble spirits, and the active soul,
 Call their blunt feelings, virtue : let them drudge,
 In regular progression, through the round
 Of formal duty, and of daily toil ;
 And, when they want the genius to be blest,
 Believe their harsh austerity is goodness ;
 If there be gods, they meant we should be happy ;
 Why give us else these appetites to be so ?
 And why, the means to crown them with indulgence ?
 To burn the feeble bonds, which hold the vulgar,
 Is noble daring.

First COURTIER.

And is therefore worthy

The high imperial spirit of Belshazzar.

Second COURTIER.

Behold a banquet, which the gods might share.

BELSHAZZAR.

To-night, my friends, your monarch shall be blest
 With ev'ry various joy ; to-night is ours ;
 Nor shall the envious gods, who view our blifs,
 And sicken as they view, to-night disturb us.
 Bring all the richest spices of the East,
 The od'rous cassia, and the dropping myrrh ;
 The liquid amber, and the fragrant gums ;
 Rob Gilead of its balms, Belshazzar bids,
 And leave the Arabian groves without an odour.
 Bring freshest flow'rs, exhaust the blooming spring,
 Twine the green myrtle with the short-liv'd rose ;
 And ever, as the blushing garland fades,
 We'll learn to snatch the fugitive delight,
 And grasp the flying joy ere it escapes us.
 Come—fill the smiling goblet for the king ;
 Belshazzar will not let a moment pass
 Unmark'd by some enjoyment ! The full bowl
 Let every guest partake !

[Courtiers kneel and drink.]

First COURTIER.

Here's to the king !

Light of the world, and glory of the earth,
 Whose word is fate !

BELSHAZZAR.

Yes, we are likest gods,
 When we have pow'r, and use it. What is wealth,
 But the blest means to gratify desire ?
 I will not have a wish, a hope, a thought,

That shall not know fruition. What is empire ?
 The privilege to punish and enjoy ;
 To feel our pow'r in making others fear it ;
 To taste of pleasure's cup till we grow giddy,
 And think ourselves immortal. This is empire !
 My ancestors scarce tasted of its joys :
 Shut from the sprightly world, and all its charms,
 In cumb'rous majesty, in sullen state,
 And dull unsocial dignity they liv'd ;
 Far from the sight of an admiring world, [ness ;
 That world, whose gaze makes half the charms of great-
 They nothing knew of empire but the name,
 Or saw it in the looks of trembling slaves ;
 And all they felt of royalty was care.
 But I will see, and know it of myself ;
 Youth, Wealth, and Greatness court me to be blest,
 And Pow'r and Pleasure draw with equal force
 And sweet attraction : both I will embrace
 With fond delight : but this is Pleasure's day ;
 Ambition will have time to reign hereafter ;
 It is the proper appetite of age.
 The lust of pow'r shall lord it uncontroll'd,
 When all the gen'rous feelings grow obtuse,
 And stern donation holds, with rigid hand,
 His iron rein, and sits and sways alone.
 But Youth is Pleasure's hour !

First COURTIER.

Perish the slave

Who, with officious counsel, would oppose
 The king's desire, whose slightest wish is law !

BELSHAZZAR.

Now strike the loud-ton'd lyre, and softer lute ;
 Let me have music, with the nobler aid
 Of poesy ! Where are those cunning men,
 Who boast, by chosen sounds, and measur'd sweetness,
 To set the busy spirits in a flame,
 And cool them at their will ? who know the art

To call the hidden pow'rs of numbers forth,
 And make that pliant instrument, the mind,
 Yield to the pow'rful sympathy of sound,
 Obedient to the master's artful hand ?
 Such magic is in song ! Then give me song ;
 Yet not at first such soul-dissolving strains,
 As melt the soften'd sense ; but such bold measures,
 As may inflame my spirit to despise
 'The ambitious Persian, that presumptuous boy,
 Who rashly dares ev'n now invest our city,
 And menaces th' invincible Belshazzar.

A grand CONCERT of MUSIC, after which an ODE.

In vain shall Persian Cyrus dare
 With great Belshazzar wage unequal war :
 In vain Darius shall combine,
 Darius, leader of the Median line ;
 While fair Euphrates' stream our wall protects,
 And great Belshazzar's self our fate directs.
 War and famine threat in vain,
 While this demi-god shall reign !
 Let Persia's prostrate king confess his pow'r,
 And Media's monarch dread his vengeful hour.
 On Dura's * ample plain behold
 Immortal Belus, † whom the nations own ;
 Sublime he stands in burnish'd gold,
 And richest off'rings his bright altars crown.

* Daniel, chap. iii.

† See a very fine description of the Temple of this Idol.

———— The tow'ring fane
 Of Bel, Chaldean Jove, surpassing far
 That Doric Temple, which the Elean chiefs
 Rais'd to their thunderer from the spoils of war ;
 Or that Ionic, where the Ephesian bow'd
 To Dian, queen of heaven. Eight towers arise,
 Each above each, immeasurable height.
 A monument at once of Eastern pride,
 And slavish superstition, &c. &c.

To-night his deity we here adore,
 And due libations speak his mighty pow'r.
 Yet Belus' self not more we own,
 Than great Belshazzar on Chaldea's throne.

Great Belshazzar, like a god,
 Rules the nations with a nod !

To great Belshazzar be the goblet crown'd !
 Belshazzar's name the echoing roofs rebound !

BELSHAZZAR.

Enough ! the kindling rapture fires my brain,
 And my heart dances to the flatt'ring sounds.
 I feel myself a god ! Why not a god ?
 What were the deities our fathers worshipp'd ?
 What was great Nimrod, our imperial founder ?
 What, greater Belus, to whose pow'r divine
 We raise to-night the banquet and the song,
 But youthful heroes, mortal, like myself,
 Who by their daring earn'd divinity ?
 They were but men : nay, some were less than men,
 Though now rever'd as gods. What was Anubis,
 Whom Egypt's sapient sons adore ? A dog !
 And shall not I, young, valiant, and a king,
 Dare more ? do more ? be greater than the rest ?
 I will indulge the thought.—Fill me more wine,
 To cherish and exalt the young idea ! *[He drinks.*
 Ne'er did Olympian Jupiter himself
 Quaff such immortal draughts.

First COURTIER.

What could that Canaan,
 That heaven in hope, that nothing in possession,
 That air-built bliss of the deluded Jews,
 That promis'd land of milk, and flowing honey ;
 What cou'd that fancy'd paradise bestow
 To match these generous juices ?

BELSHAZZAR.

Hold—enough !
 Thou hast rous'd a thought ; by Heav'n I will enjoy it ;

A glorious thought ! which will exalt to rapture
The pleasures of the banquet, and bestow
A yet untasted relish of delight.

First COURTIER.

What means the king ?

BELSHAZZAR.

The Jews ! saidst thou the Jews ?

First COURTIER.

I spoke of that undone, that outcast people,
'The tributary creatures of thy pow'r,
'The captives of thy will, whose very breath
Hangs on the sov'reign pleasure of the king.

BELSHAZZAR.

When that abandon'd race was hither brought,
Were not the choicest treasures of their temple,
(Devoted to their God, and held most precious)
Among the spoils which grac'd *Nebassar's triumph,
And lodg'd in Babylon ?

First COURTIER.

O king ! they were.

Second COURTIER.

The Jews, with superstitious awe, behold
These sacred symbols of their ancient faith :
Nor has captivity abated aught
The rev'rend love they bear these holy reliques.
Though we deride their law, and scorn their persons,
Yet never have we yet to human use
Devoted those rich vessels, set apart
To sacred purposes.

* The name of Nebuchadnezzar not being reducible to verse,
have adopted that of Nebassar, on the authority of the ingenious and
learned Author of *Judah Restored*.

BELSHAZZAR.

I joy to hear it !

Go—fetch them hither. They shall grace our banquet.
 Does not one stir ? Belshazzar disobey'd ?
 And yet you live ! Whence comes this strange reluctance ?
 This new-born rev'rence for the helpless Jews ?
 This fear to injure those, who can't revenge it ?
 Send to the sacred treasury in haste,
 Let all be hither brought ;——who answers, dies.

[They go out.]

The mantling wine a higher joy will yield,
 Pour'd from the precious flagons, which adorn'd
 Their far-fam'd temple, now in ashes laid.
 Oh ! 'twill exalt the pleasure into transport,
 To gall those whining, praying Israelites !
 I laugh to think what wild dismay will seize them,
 When they shall learn the use that has been made
 Of all their holy trumpery !

[The vessels are brought in.]

Second COURTIER.

It comes !

A goodly shew ! how bright with gold and gems !
 Far fitter for a youthful monarch's board,
 Than the cold shrine of an unheeding God.

BELSHAZZAR.

Fill me that massy goblet to the brim.
 Now, Abraham ! let thy wretched race expect
 The fable of their faith to be fulfill'd ;
 Their second temple, and their promis'd king !
 Now will they see, he's impotent to save ;
 For had he pow'r to help, he would have hinder'd
 This profanation:

[As the king is going to drink, thunder is heard ; he starts from the throne, spies a hand, which writes on the wall these words ; MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. He lets fall the goblet, and stands in an attitude of speechless horror. All start, and are terrified.]

First COURTIER, *after a long pause.*
Oh, transcendent horror !

Second COURTIER.
What may this mean ! The king is greatly mov'd !

Third COURTIER.
Nor is it strange—who unappall'd can view it ?
Those sacred cups ! I doubt we've gone too far.

First COURTIER.
Observe the fear-struck king ! his starting eyes
Roll horribly. Thrice he essay'd to speak,
And thrice his tongue refus'd.

BELSHAZZAR, *in a low trembling voice.*
Ye mystic words !

Thou semblance of an hand ! illusive forms !
Ye dire fantastic images, what are ye ?
Dread shadows, speak ! Explain your horrible meaning !
Ye will not answer me.—Yes, yes, I feel
I am a mortal now—My failing limbs
Refuse to bear me up. I am no god !
Gods do not tremble thus.—Support me, hold me ;
'These loosen'd joints, these knees which smite each other,
Betray I'm but a man—a weak one too !

First COURTIER.
In truth, 'tis passing strange, and full of horror !

BELSHAZZAR.
Send for the learn'd magicians, every sage
Who deals in wizard spells and magic charms.

[Some go out.]

First COURTIER.
How fares my lord the king ?

BELSHAZZAR.
Am I a king ?
What pow'r have I ? Ye lying slaves, I am not.

Oh, soul-distracting sight ! but is it real ?
 Perhaps 'tis fancy all, or the wild dream
 Of mad distemperature, the fumes of wine !
 I'll look upon't no more !—So—now I'm well !
 I am a king again, and know not fear.
 And yet my eyes will seek that fatal spot ;
 And fondly dwell upon the sight, that blaits them !
 Again, 'tis there ! it is not fancy's work.
 I see it still ! 'tis written on the wall.
 I see the writing, but the viewless writer,
 Who, what is he ? Oh, horror ! horror ! horror !
 It cannot be the God of these poor Jews ;
 For what is He, that he can thus afflict ?

Second COURTIER.

Let not my lord the king be thus dismay'd.

Third COURTIER.

Let not a phantom, an illusive shade,
 Disturb the peace of him, who rules the world.

BELSHAZZAR.

No more, ye wretched sycophants ! no more !
 The sweetest note which flatt'ry now can strike,
 Harsh and discordant grates upon my soul.
 Talk not of power to one so full of fear,
 So weak, so impotent. Look on that wall ;
 If thou wouldst sooth my soul, explain the writing ;
 And thou shalt be my oracle, my God !
 Tell me from whence it came, and what it means,
 And I'll believe I am again a king !
 Friends ! princes ! ease my troubled breast ; and say,
 What do the mystic characters portend ?

First COURTIER.

'Tis not in us, O king ! to ease thy spirit ;
 We are not skill'd in those mysterious arts,
 Which wait the midnight studies of the sage :

But of the deep diviners thou shalt learn,
 The wise astrologers, the sage magicians ;
 Who, of events unborn, take secret note,
 And hold deep commerce with the unseen world.

Enter ASTROLOGERS, MAGICIANS, &c. &c.

BELSHAZZAR.

Approach, ye sages, 'tis the king commands !

[They kneel.]

ASTROLOGERS.

Hail, mighty king of Babylon !

BELSHAZZAR.

Nay, rise :

I do not need your homage, but your help ;
 The world may worship, you must counsel me.
 He, who declares the secret of the king,
 No common honours shall await his skill ;
 Our empire shall be tax'd for his reward,
 And he himself shall name the gift he wishes.
 A splendid scarlet robe shall grace his limbs,
 His neck a princely chain of gold adorn,
 Meet honours for such wisdom ; he shall rule
 The third in rank throughout our Babylon !

Second ASTROLOGER.

Such recompense becomes Belshazzar's bounty.
 Let the king speak the secret of his soul ;
 Which heard, his humble creatures shall unfold.

BELSHAZZAR, *points to the wall.*

Be't so—Look there—behold those characters !
 Nay, do not start, for I will know their meaning !
 Ha ! answer ; speak, or instant death awaits you !
 What, dumb ! all dumb ! where is your boasted skill ?
[They confer together.]

97
Keep them afunder—No confed'racy—
No fecret plots to make your tales agree.
Speak, flaves, and dare to let me know the worft !

First ASTROLOGER.

[*They kneel.*
O, let the king forgive his faithful fervants !

Second ASTROLOGER.

O mitigate our threaten'd doom of death ;
If we declare, with mingled grief and fhame,
We cannot tell the fecret of the king,
Nor what thefe myftic characters portend !

BELSHAZZAR.

Off with their heads ! Ye fhall not live an hour !
Curfe on your fhallow arts, your lying fcience !
'Tis thus you praftife on the credulous world,
Who think you wife, becaufe themfelves are weak !
But, mifcreants, ye fhall die ! the pow'r to punifh
Is all that I have left me of a king.

First COURTIER.

Great Sir ! fufpend their punifhment a while.
Behold fage Nitocris, thy royal mother !

BELSHAZZAR.

My mother here !

Enter QUEEN.

QUEEN.

O my misguided fon !

Well may'ft thou wonder to behold me here :
For I have ever fhunn'd this fcene of riot,
Where wild Intemperance and difhonour'd Mirth
Hold festival impure. Yet, O Belshazzar !
I could not hear the wonders which befel,
And leave thee to the workings of defpair :
For, fpite of all the anguish of my foul

At thy offences, I'm thy mother still !
 Against the solemn purpose I had form'd
 Never to mix in this unhallow'd crowd,
 The wondrous story of the mystic writing,
 Of strange and awful import, brings me here ;
 If haply I may shew some likely means
 To fathom this dark mystery.

BELSHAZZAR.

Speak, O queen !

My list'ning soul shall hang upon thy words,
 And prompt obedience follow them !

QUEEN.

Then hear me.

Among the captive tribes, which hither came
 To grace Nebassar's triumph, there was brought
 A youth nam'd Daniel, favour'd by high Heav'n
 With pow'r to look into the secret page
 Of dim futurity's mysterious volume.
 The spirit of the holy Gods is in him :
 No vision so obscure, no fate so dark,
 No sentence so perplex'd, but he can solve it ;
 Can trace each crooked labyrinth of thought,
 Each winding maze of doubt, and make it clear
 And palpable to sense. He twice explain'd
 The monarch's mystic dreams. The holy seer
 Saw, with prophetic spirit, what befel
 The king long after. For his wondrous skill
 He was rewarded, honour'd, and carefs'd,
 And with the rulers of Chaldea rank'd :
 Though now, alas ! thrown by ; his services
 Forgotten or neglected ; such the meed
 Which virtue finds in courts.

BELSHAZZAR.

Dispatch with speed

A message, to command the holy man
 To meet us on the instant.

NITOCRIS.

I already
Have sent to ask his presence at the palace ;
And, lo ! he comes.

Enter DANIEL.

BELSHAZZAR.

Welcome, thrice venerable sage ! approach.
Art thou that Daniel, whom my great forefather
Brought hither with the captive tribes of Judah ?

DANIEL.

I am that Daniel.

BELSHAZZAR.

Pardon, holy prophet ;
Nor let a just resentment of thy wrongs,
And long neglected merit, shut thy heart
Against a king's request, a suppliant king !

DANIEL.

The God I worship teaches to forgive.

BELSHAZZAR.

Then let thy words bring comfort to my soul.
I've heard the spirit of the Gods is in thee ;
That thou canst look into the fates of men,
With prescience more than human !

DANIEL.

Hold, O king !
Wisdom is from above, 'tis God's own gift.
I of myself am nothing ; but from Him
The little knowledge I possess, I hold :
To him be all the glory.

BELSHAZZAR.

Then, O Daniel !
If thou indeed dost boast that wondrous gift,

That faculty divine ; look there, and tell me !
 O say, what mean those mystic characters ?
 Remove this load of terror from my soul ;
 And honours, such as kings can give, await thee :
 Thou shalt be great beyond thy soul's ambition,
 And rich above thy wildest dream of wealth :
 Clad in the scarlet robe our nobles wear,
 And grac'd with princely ensigns, thou shalt stand
 Near our own throne, and third within our empire.

DANIEL.

O mighty king ! thy gifts with thee remain,
 And let thy high rewards on others fall.
 The princely ensign, nor the scarlet robe,
 Nor yet to be the third within thy realm,
 Can touch the soul of Daniel. Honour, fame,
 All that the world calls great, thy crown itself,
 Could never satisfy the vast ambition
 Of an immortal spirit, which aspires
 To an eternal crown, a crown of glory !

First COURTIER.

[*Aside.*

Our priests teach no such notions.

DANIEL.

Yet, O king !

Though all unmov'd by grandeur, or by gift,
 I will unfold the high decrees of Heav'n,
 And straight declare the mystery.

BELSHAZZAR.

Speak, O prophet !

DANIEL.

Prepare to hear, what kings have feldom heard ;
 Prepare to hear, what these have never told thee :
 Prepare to hear the TRUTH. The mighty God,
 Who rules the sceptres and the hearts of kings,

Gave thy renown'd forefather* here to reign,
 With such extent of empire, weight of power,
 And greatness of dominion, the wide earth
 Trembled beneath the terror of his name,
 And kingdoms stood or fell as he decreed.
 Oh ! dangerous pinnacle of power supreme !
 Who can stand safe upon its treach'rous top,
 Behold the gazing prostrate world below,
 Whom depth and distance into pigmies shrink,
 And not grow giddy ? Babylon's great king
 Forgot he was a man, a helpless man,
 Subject to pain, and sin, and death, like others !
 But who shall fight against Omnipotence ?
 Or who hath harden'd his obdurate heart
 Against the Majesty of Heav'n, and prosper'd ?
 The God he had insulted was aveng'd ;
 From empire, from the joys of social life,
 He drove him forth ; extinguish'd reason's lamp,
 Quench'd that bright spark of deity within ;
 Compell'd him, with the forest brutes, to roam
 For scanty pasture ; and the mountain dews
 Fell, cold and wet, on his defenceless head :
 Till he confess'd—Let men, let monarchs hear !—
 Till he confess'd, PRIDE WAS NOT MADE FOR MAN !

NITOCRIS.

O, awful instance of divine displeasure !

BELSHAZZAR.

Proceed ! My soul is wrapt in fix'd attention !

DANIEL.

O king ! thy grandfire not in vain had sinn'd,
 If, from his error, thou hadst learnt the truth.
 The story of his fall thou oft hast heard,
 But has it taught thee wisdom ? Thou, like him,
 Hast been elate with power, and mad with pride.

* Nebuchadnezzar.

Like him, thou hast defy'd the living Gen.
 Nay, to bold thoughts, hast added deeds more bold.
 Thou hast outwrought the pattern he bequeath'd thee,
 And quite outgone example ; hast profan'd,
 With impious hand, the vessels of the Temple :
 Those vessels, sanctify'd to holiest use,
 Thou hast polluted with unhallow'd lips,
 And made the instruments of foul debauch.
 Thou hast ador'd the gods of wood and stone,
 Vile, senseless deities, the work of hands ;
 But HE, THE KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS,
 In whom exists thy life, thy soul, thy breath,
 On whom thy being hangs, thou hast deny'd.

First COURTIER.

[Aside to the others.

With what an holy boldness he reproves him !

Second COURTIER.

Such is the fearless confidence of virtue !
 And such the righteous courage those maintain,
 Who plead the cause of truth ! The smallest word,
 He utters, had been death to half the court.

BELSHAZZAR.

Now let the mystic writing be explain'd,
 Thrice venerable sage !

DANIEL.

O mighty king !

Hear then its awful import : God has number'd
 Thy days of royalty, and soon will end them.
 The All-wise has weigh'd thee in the even balance
 Of his own holy law, and finds thee wanting :
 And last, Thy kingdom shall be wrested from thee ;
 And know, the Mede and Persian shall possess it.

BELSHAZZAR.

[He starts up

Prophet, when shall this be ?

DANIEL.

In God's own time :
 Here my commission ends ; I may not utter
 More than thou hast heard ; but O ! remember, king !
 Thy days are number'd ; hear, repent, and live !

BELSHAZZAR.

Say, prophet, what can penitence avail ?
 If Heav'n's decrees immutably are fix'd,
 Can pray'rs avert our fate ?

DANIEL.

They change our hearts,
 And thus dispose Omnipotence to mercy.
 'Tis man that alters, God is still the same.
Conditional are all Heav'n's covenants :
 And when th' uplifted thunder is withheld,
 'Tis pray'r that deprecates th' impending bolt.
 Good * Hezekiah's days were number'd too ;
 But penitence and tears were mighty pleas ;
 At Mercy's throne they never plead in vain.

[*He is going.*]

BELSHAZZAR.

Stay, prophet, and receive thy promis'd gift :
 The scarlet robe and princely chain are thine :
 And let my heralds publish through the land,
 That Daniel stands, in dignity and pow'r,
 The third in Babylon. These just rewards
 Thou well may'st claim, though sad thy prophecy !

QUEEN.

Be not deceiv'd, my son ! nor let thy soul
 Snatch an uncertain moment's treach'rous rest,
 On the dread brink of that tremendous gulf
 Which yawns beneath thee.

* 2 Chron. chap. xxxiii. Also Isaiah, chap. xxxviii.

BELSHAZZAR :

DANIEL.

O unhappy king !

Know what *must* happen once, *may* happen soon.
 Remember, that 'tis terrible to meet
 Great evils unprepar'd ! and, O Belshazzar !
 In the wild moment of dismay and death,
 Remember thou wast warn'd ! and, O ! remember,
 Warnings despis'd are condemnations then !

[*Exeunt Daniel and Queen.*]

BELSHAZZAR.

'Tis well—my soul shakes off its load of care :
 'Tis only the obscure is terrible.
 Imagination frames events unknown,
 In wild fantastic shapes of hideous ruin ;
 And what it fears, creates !—I know the worst ;
 And awful is that worst, as fear could feign :
 But distant are the ills, I have to dread !
 What is remote may be uncertain too !
 Ha ! princes ! hope breaks in !—This may not be !

First COURTIER.

Perhaps this Daniel is in league with Persia ;
 And brib'd by Cyrus to report these horrors,
 To weaken and impede the mighty plans
 Of thy imperial mind !

BELSHAZZAR.

'Tis very like.

Second COURTIER.

Return we to the banquet.

BELSHAZZAR.

Dare we venture ?

Third COURTIER.

Let not this dreaming fear disturb the king.
 Against the pow'r of Cyrus, and the Mede,

Is Babylon secure. Her brazen gates
Mock all attempts to force them. Proud Euphrates,
A watry bulwark, guards our ample city
From all assailants. And within the walls
Of this stupendous capital are lodg'd
Such vast provisions, such exhaustless stores,
As a twice ten years siege could never waste !

BELSHAZZAR. *Embraces him.*

My better genius ! To the banquet then !

[As they are going to resume their places at the banquet, a dreadful uproar is heard, tumultuous cries, and war-like sounds. All stand terrified. Enter soldiers, with their swords drawn, and wounded.]

SOLDIER.

Oh, helpless Babylon ! Oh, wretched king !
Chaldea is no more, the Mede has conquer'd !
The victor Cyrus, like a mighty torrent,
Comes rushing on, and marks his way with ruin !

BELSHAZZAR.

Impossible ! Villain and slave, thou ly'st ;
Euphrates and the brazen gates secure us.
While those remain, Belshazzar laughs at danger.

SOLDIER.

Euphrates is diverted from its course,
The brazen gates are burst, the city's taken,
Thyself a pris'ner, and thy empire lost.

BELSHAZZAR.

Oh, Prophet ! I remember thee too soon.

[He runs out. They follow in the utmost confusion.]

Enter several JEWS, MEDES, and BABY-
LONIANS.

First JEW.

He comes, he comes ! the long predicted prince,
Cyrus ! the destin'd instrument of Heav'n,

BELSHAZZAR :

To free our captive nation, and restore
 JEHOVAH's Temple ! Carnage marks his way,
 And Conquest sets upon his plume-crown'd helm !

Second JEW.

What noise is that ?

First JEW.

Hark ! 'Tis Belshazzar's voice !

BELSHAZZAR.

[*Without.*]

O Soldier ! spare my life, and aid my flight ;
 Such treasures shall reward the gentle deed,
 As Persia never saw ! I'll be thy slave ;
 I'll yield my crown to Cyrus, I'll adore
 His gods and thine—I'll kneel and kiss thy feet,
 And worship thee—It is not much I ask—
 I'll live in bondage, beggary, and pain,
 So thou but let me live !

SOLDIER.

Die, tyrant, die !

BELSHAZZAR.

O Daniel ! Daniel ! Daniel !

Enter SOLDIER.

SOLDIER.

Belshazzar's dead !
 The wretched king breath'd out his furious soul
 In that tremendous groan.

First JEW.

Belshazzar's dead !
 Then, Judah ! art thou free ! The tyrant's fall'n !
 Jerusalem, Jerusalem is free !

 PART III.

Enter DANIEL, and JEWS.

DANIEL.

BEL boweth down,* and haughty Nebo stoops !
 The idols fall ; the god and worshipper
 Together fall ! together they bow down !
 Each other, or themselves, they cannot save.
 O, Babylon ! where is thy refuge now ?
 Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, meant to save,
 Pervert thee ; and thy blessing is thy bane !
 Where are thy brutish deities, Chaldea ?
 Where are thy gods of gold ?—Oh, Lord of life !
 Thou very God ! so fall thy foes before thee !

First JEW.

So fell beneath the terrors of thy name
 The idol Chemosh, Moab's empty trust ;
 So Ammonitish Moloch sunk before thee ;
 So fell Philistine Dagon : so shall fall,
 To Time's remotest period, all thy foes !

DANIEL.

Not for myself, O Judah ! but for thee,
 I shed these tears of joy. For I no more
 Must view the cedars which adorn the brow
 Of Syrian Lebanon ; no more shall see
 Thy pleasant stream, O Jordan ! nor the flocks
 Which whiten all the mountains of Judea ;
 Nor Carmel's heights, nor Sharon's flow'ry vales.
 I must remain in Babylon ! So Heav'n,
 To whose awards I bow me, has decreed.
 I ne'er shall see thee, Salem ! I am old ;
 And few, and toilsome, are my days to come.

* Isaiah, chap. xlyi.

But we shall meet in those celestial climes,
 Compar'd with which, created glories sink ;
 Where sinners shall have pow'r to harm no more,
 And martyr'd Virtue rests her weary head.
 'Though ere my days of promis'd grace shall come,
 I shall be try'd by perils strange and new ;
 Nor shall I taste of death, so have I learn'd,
 'Till I have seen the captive tribes restor'd.

First J E W.

And shall we view, once more, thy hallow'd tow'rs,
 Imperial Salem ?

DANIEL.

Yes, my youthful friends !
 You shall behold the second temple* rise,
 With grateful ecstasy : but we, your fires,
 Now bent with hoary age ; we, whose charm'd eyes
 Beheld the matchless glories of the first,
 Should weep, remembering what we once had seen,
 That model of perfection !

Second J E W.

Never more
 Shall such another structure grace the earth.

DANIEL.

Well have you borne affliction, men of Judah !
 Well have sustain'd your portion of distress ;
 And, unrepining, drank the bitter dregs
 Of adverse fortune ! Happier days await you.
 O guard against the perils of success !
 Prosperity dissolves the yielding soul,
 And the bright sun of shining fortune melts
 The firmest virtue down. Beware, my friends,
 Be greatly cautious of prosperity !
 Defend your sliding hearts ; and, trembling, think
 How those, who buffeted Affliction's waves
 With vig'rous virtue, sunk in Pleasure's calm.

He,* who of special grace had been allow'd
 'To rear the hallow'd fane to Israel's God,
 By wealth corrupted, and by ease debauch'd,
 Forsook the God to whom he rais'd the fane ;
 And, sunk in sensual sloth, consum'd his days
 In vile idolatrous rites !——Nor think, my sons,
 That virtue in sequester'd *solitude*
 Is always found. Within the inmost soul
 The hidden tempter lurks ; nor less betrays,
 In the still, seeming safety of retreat,
 Than where the treach'rous world delusive smiles.
 Who thinks himself secure, is half undone ;
 For sin, unwatch'd, may reach the sanctuary :
 No place preserves us from it. Righteous Lot
 Stemm'd the strong current of Corruption's tide,
 Ev'n in polluted Sodom ; safe he liv'd,
 While circumspective Virtue's watchful eye
 Was anxiously awake : but in the shade,
 Far from the threat'ning perils which alarm
 With visible temptation, secret sin
 Ensnar'd him ; in security he fell.

Second J E W.

Thy prudent counsels in our hearts shall live,
 As if a pen of adamant had grav'd them.

First J E W.

The dawn approaches ; let us part, my friend,
 Secure of peace, since tyranny is fall'n !

DANIEL.

So perish all thine enemies, O LORD !
 So, mighty God ! shall perish all, who seek
 Corrupted pleasures in the turbid waves
 Of life's polluted stream ; and madly quit
 The living fountain of perennial grace !

* Solomon.

THE END.

Persons of the Drama.

DARIUS, King of MEDIA and BABYLON.

PHARNACES, }
SORANUS, } Courtiers, enemies to Daniel.

ARASPES, a young MEDIAN Lord, friend and
convert of DANIEL.

DANIEL.

SCENE, The City of BABYLON.

☞ The Subject of this Drama is taken from the Sixth
Chapter of the Book of the Prophet DANIEL.

Daniel :

A

SACRED DRAMA.

PART I.

The Righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the Wicked cometh in his stead.—PROVERBS of SOLOMON.

On peut des plus grands rois surprendre la justice.
Incapable de tromper,
Ils ont peine à s'échapper
Des pièges de l'artifice.
Un cœur noble ne peut soupçonner en autrui.
La bassesse et la malice
Qu'il ne sent point en lui.

ESTHER. TRAGÉDIE de RACINE.

PHARNACES, SORANUS.

PHARNACES.

YES !—I have noted with a jealous eye,
The power of this new fav'rite ! Daniel reigns,
And not Darius ! Daniel guides the springs,
Which move this mighty empire ! High he sits,
Supreme in favour both with prince and people !
Where is the spirit of our Median lords,
Tamely to crouch and bend the supple knee
To this new god ? By Mithras, 'tis too much !
Shall great Arbaces' race to Daniel bow ?
A foreigner, a captive, and a Jew ?
Something must be devis'd, and that right soon,
'To shake his credit.

SORANUS.

Rather hope to shake
The mountain pine, whose twisting fibres clasp

The earth, deep rooted ! Rather hope to shake
 The Scythian Taurus from his central base !
 No—Daniel sits too absolute in pow'r,
 Too firm in favour, for the keenest shaft
 Of nicely-aiming jealousy to reach him.

PHARNACES.

Rather he sits too high to sit securely.
 Hast thou then liv'd in courts ? hast thou grown grey,
 Beneath the mask a subtil statesman wears
 To hide his secret soul, and dost not know,
 That, of all fickle Fortune's transient gifts,
 Favour is most deceitful ? 'Tis a beam,
 Which darts uncertain brightness for a moment !
 The faint, precarious, sickly shine of pow'r ;
 Giv'n without merit, by caprice withdrawn.
 No trifle is so small as what obtains,
 Save that which loses it. It is a breath,
 Which hangs upon a smile ! A look, a word,
 A frown, the air-built tow'r of favour shakes,
 And down the unsubstantial fabric falls !
 Darius, just and clement as he is,
 If I mistake not, may be wrought upon
 By prudent wiles, by Flattery's pleasant cup,
 Administer'd with caution.

SORANUS.

But the means ?

For Daniel's life (a foe must grant him that)
 Is so replete with goodness, so adorn'd
 With every virtue, so exactly squar'd
 By wisdom's nicest rules, that 'twere most hard
 To charge him with the shadow of offence.
 Pure is his fame, as Scythia's mountain snows,
 When not a breath pollutes them ! O Pharnaces !
 I've scann'd the actions of his daily life
 With all th' industrious malice of a foe ;
 And nothing meets mine eye but deeds of honour !

In office pure ; for equitable acts
 Renown'd : in justice and impartial truth,
 The Grecian Themis is not more severe.

PHARNACES.

By yon bright sun, thou blazon'st forth his praise,
 As if with rapture thou didst read the page,
 Where these fair deeds are written !

SORANUS.

Thou mistak'st.

I only meant to shew, what cause we have
 To hate and fear him. I but meant to paint
 His popular virtues, and his dang'rous merit.
 Then for devotion, and religious zeal,
 Who so renown'd as Daniel ? Of his law
 Observant in th' extreme. Thrice ev'ry day,
 With prostrate rev'rence, he adores his God :
 With superstitious awe his face he turns
 Tow'rds his belov'd Jerusalem ; as if
 Some local, partial God might there be found
 To hear his supplication. No affair
 Of state ; no business so importunate ;
 No pleasure so alluring ; no employ
 Of such high import, to seduce his zeal
 From this observance due ?

PHARNACES.

There, there he falls !

Enough, my friend ! His piety destroys him.
 There, at the very footstool of his God,
 Where he implores protection, there I'll crush him !

SORANUS.

What means Pharnaces ?

PHARNACES.

Ask not what I mean !

The new idea floating in my brain,

Has yet receiv'd no form. 'Tis yet too soon
 To give it body, circumstance, or breath.
 The seeds of mighty deeds are lab'ring here,
 And struggling for a birth ! 'Tis near the hour
 The king is wont to summon us to council.
 Ere that, this big conception of my mind
 I'll shape to form and being. Thou, meanwhile,
 Convene our chosen friends ; for I shall need
 The aid of all your counsels, and the weight
 Of grave authority.

SORANUS.

Who shall be trusted ?

PHARNACES.

With our immediate motive, none, except
 A chosen band of friends, who most repine
 At Daniel's exaltation. But the scheme
 I meditate, must be disclos'd to all
 Who bear high office ; all our Median rulers,
 Princes and captains, presidents and lords ;
 All must assemble ! 'Tis a common cause :
 All but the young Araspes, he inclines
 To Daniel and his God. He sits attent,
 With ravish'd ears, to listen to his lore :
 With rev'rence names Jerusalem, and reads
 The volume of the laws ! No more he bows,
 To hail the golden Ruler of the Day ;
 But looks for some great Prophet, greater far,
 So they pretend, than Mithras ! From him, therefore,
 Conceal whate'er of injury is devis'd
 'Gainst Daniel. Be it too thy care to-day,
 To keep him from the council.

SORANUS.

'Tis well thought.

'Tis now about the hour of Daniel's pray'r,
 Araspes too is with him ; and to-day
 They will not sit in council. Haste we then !

Designs of high importance, once conceiv'd,
Should be accomplish'd. Genius to discern,
And courage to achieve, despise the aid
Of ling'ring circumspection. The keen spirit
Seizes the prompt occasion, and at once
Plans and performs, resolves and executes !

PART II.

SCENE, DANIEL's House.

DANIEL, ARASPES.

ARASPES.

PROCEED, proceed, thrice venerable sage !
Enlighten my dark mind with this new ray,
This dawning of salvation ! Tell me more
Of this expected King ! this Prince of Peace !
This Promise of the Nations ! this great Hope
Of anxious Israel ! This mighty Prophet !
This Balm of Gilead, which shall heal the wounds
Of universal nature ! this MESSIAH !
Redeemer, Saviour, Sufferer, Victim, God !

DANIEL.

Enough to animate our faith, we know,
But not enough to soothe the curious pride
Of vain philosophy ! Were all reveal'd,
Hope would have then no object, God no fear,
And Faith no exercise. Enough to cheer
Our path we see, the rest is hid in clouds ;
And Heav'n's own shadows rest upon the view !

ARASPES.

Go on, blest sage ! I could forever hear,
Untir'd, thy admonition ! Tell me, how

I shall obtain the favour of that God
I but begin to know.

DANIEL.

By holy deeds,
By deep humility, by faith unfeign'd.
O Faith,* thou wonder-working principle !
Eternal substance of our present hope,
Thou evidence of things invisible !
What cannot man sustain, sustain'd by thee ?
The time would fail, and the bright star of day
Would quench his beams in ocean, and resign
His empire to the silver queen of night ;
And she again descend the steep of Heav'n,
If I should tell what wonders Faith achiev'd,
By Gideon, Barak, and the sapient seer,
Elkanah's son ; the pious Gileadite,
Ill-fated Jephthah ! He of Zorah † too,
In strength unéquall'd ; and the shepherd-king,
Who slew the giant of Gath ! Why should I tell
Of holy Prophets, who, by conquering Faith,
Wrought deeds incredible to mortal sense ;
Vanquish'd contending kingdoms, quell'd the rage
Of furious pestilence, extinguish'd fire ?
Victorious Faith ! others by thee endur'd
Exile, disgrace, captivity, and death !
Some, uncomplaining, bore (nor be it deem'd
The meanest exercise of well-try'd Faith)
The bitter taunts of undeserv'd reproach ;
Despising shame, that death to human pride !

ARASPES.

How shall this faith be fought ?

DANIEL.

By earnest pray'r.
Solicit first the wisdom from above ;

* Hebrews, chap. xi.

† Samson.

Wisdom,* whose fruits are purity and peace !
 Wisdom ! that bright intelligence, which sat
 Supreme, when with his golden † compasses
 Th' Eternal plann'd the fabric of the world,
 Produc'd his fair idea into light,
 And said, That all was good ! Wisdom, blest beam !
 The brightness of the everlasting light !
 The spotless mirror of the pow'r of God !
 The reflex image of th' all-perfect mind !
 A stream tranfluent, flowing from the source
 Of glory infinite ; a cloudless light !
 Defilement cannot touch, nor sin pollute
 Her unstain'd purity ! Not Ophir's gold,
 Nor Ethiopia's gems can match her price !
 The diamond of the mine is pale before her !
 And, like the oil Elifha's bounty blefs'd,
 She is a treasure which doth grow by use,
 And multiply by spending ! She contains,
 Within herself, the sum of excellence.
 If riches are desir'd, wisdom is wealth !
 If prudenc. where shall keen invention find
 Artificer more cunning ? If renown,
 In her right-hand it comes ! If piety,
 Are not her labours virtues ? If the lore
 Which sage experience teaches, lo ! she scans
 Antiquity's dark truths ; the past she knows,
 Anticipates the future ; not by arts
 Forbidden, of Chaldean forcerer ;
 But from the piercing ken of deep foreknowledge ;
 From her sure science of the human heart ;
 Weighing effects with causes, ends with means ;
 And from the probable the certain forms,
 With palpable conjecture !

* Wisdom of Solomon, chap. vii.

† See Paradise Lost, book vii. l. 225 ; also Proverbs, chap. vi.
 ver. 27.

ARASPE'S.

Now, O Prophet !

Explain the secret doubts which rack my mind,
 And my weak sense confound. Give me some line
 To sound the depths of Providence ! O say,
 Why the ungodly prosper ? why their root
 Shoots deep, and their thick branches flourish fair,
 Like the green bay tree ? why the righteous man,
 Like tender plants, to shiv'ring winds expos'd,
 Is stripp'd and torn, in naked virtue bare,
 And nipp'd by cruel sorrow's biting blast ?
 Explain, O Daniel ! these mysterious ways,
 To my faint apprehension ! For as yet
 I've much to learn. Fair Truth's immortal sun
 Is sometimes hid in clouds ; not that her light
 Is in itself defective ; but obscur'd
 By my weak prejudice, imperfect Faith,
 And all the thousand causes which obstruct
 The growth of virtue.

DANIEL.

Follow me, Araspe !

Within, thou shalt peruse the sacred page,
 The book of life eternal ! there thou wilt see
 The END of the ungodly ; thou wilt own
 How short their longest period ; wilt perceive
 How black a night succeeds their brightest day !
 Weigh well this book ; and may the Spirit of Grace,
 Who stamp'd the seal of truth on the blest page,
 Descend into thy soul, remove thy doubts,
 Clear the perplex'd, and solve the intricate,
 Till Faith be lost in sight, and Hope in joy !

 PART III.

DARIUS *on his Throne.* PHARNACES, SORANUS, PRINCES, PRESIDENTS, and COURTIERs.

PHARNACES.

O KING Darius, live for ever !

DARIUS.

Welcome !

Welcome, my princes, presidents and friends !
 Now tell me, has your wisdom ought devis'd
 To serve the common weal ? In our new empire,
 Subdu'd Chaldea, is there ought remains
 Your prudence can suggest, to serve the state,
 To benefit the subject, to redress
 And raise the injur'd ? to assist th' oppress'd,
 And humble the oppressor ? If you know,
 Speak freely, princes ! Wherefore am I king,
 Except to poise the awful scale of justice
 With even hand ; to minister to want,
 To bless the nations with a lib'ral rule,
 Vicegerent of th' eternal Oromasdes !

PHARNACES.

So absolute thy wisdom, mighty king !
 All counsel were superfluous.

DARIUS.

Hold, Pharnaces.

No flatt'ry, prince ; it is the death of virtue ;
 Who gives it is of all mankind the lowest,
 Save he who takes it. Monarchs are but men ;
 As feeble and as frail as those they rule,

And born, like them, to die. The Lydian king,
 Unhappy Croesus ! lately fat aloft,
 Almost above mortality ; now see him,
 Sunk to the vile condition of a slave,
 He swells the train of Cyrus ! I, like him,
 To mis'ry am obnoxious. See this throne :
 'This very throne the great Nebassar* fill'd ;
 Yet hence his pride expell'd him. Yonder wall,
 'The dread terrific writing to the eyes
 Of proud Belhazzar shew'd ; sad monuments
 Of Heaven's tremendous vengeance ! and shall I,
 Unwarn'd by such examples, cherish pride ?
 Yet to their dire calamities I owe
 The brightest gem that glistens in my crown,
 Sage Daniel. If my speech have aught of worth,
 Or if my life with aught of good be grac'd,
 To him alone I owe it.

SORANUS. [*Aside to Pharnaces.*

Now, Pharnaces,
 Will he run o'er, and dwell upon his praise,
 As if we ne'er had heard it ; nay, will swell
 The nauseous catalogue with many a virtue
 His own fond fancy coins.

PHARNACES.

O, great Darius !
 Let thine unworthy servant's words find grace,
 And meet acceptance in his royal ear,
 Who subjugates the East ! Let not the king
 With anger hear my pray'r.

DARIUS.

Pharnaces, speak !
 I know thou lov'st me : I but meant to chide
 Thy flatt'ry, not reprove thee for thy zeal.
 Speak boldly, friends, as man should speak to man.

* Nebuchadnezzar.

Perish the barb'rous maxims of the East,
Which basely would enslave the free-born mind,
And plunder it of the best gift of Heav'n,
Its liberty!

PHARNACES.

Then, O Darius, hear me
Thy princes, and the captains of thy bands,
Thy presidents, the governors who rule
Thy provinces, and I, thine humble creature,
(Less than the least in merit, but in love,
In zeal, and duty, equal with the first ;)
We have devis'd a measure to confirm
Thy infant empire ; to establish here
Thy pow'r with firm dominion, and secure
Thy growing greatness, past the power of change.

DARIUS.

I am prepar'd to hear thee. Speak, Pharnaces !

PHARNACES.

The wretched Babylonians long have groan'd.
Beneath the rule of princes, weak or rash.
The rod of power was fallibly sway'd alike
By feeble Merodach, and fierce Belshazzar.
One let the slacken'd reins too loosely float
Upon the people's neck, and lost his pow'r
By nerveless relaxation. He, who follow'd,
Held with a tyrant's hand the cruel curb,
And check'd the groaning nation till it bled.
On diff'rent rocks they met one common ruin.
Their edicts were irresolute, their laws
Were feebly plann'd, their councils ill-advis'd ;
Now so relax'd, and now so overstrain'd,
That the tir'd people, wearied with the weight
They long have borne, will soon disdain control,
Tread on all rule, and spurn the hand that guides 'em.

DARIUS.

But say what remedy ?

PHARNACES.

That too, O king !

Thy servants have provided. Hitherto
 They bear the yoke submissive. But to fix
 Thy pow'r, and their obedience ; to reduce
 All hearts to thy dominion, yet avoid
 Those deeds of cruelty thy nature starts at—
 Thou shouldst begin by some imperial act
 Of absolute dominion, yet unstain'd
 By aught of barbarous. For know, O king !
 Wholesome severity, if wisely rul'd
 With sober discipline, procures respect,
 More than the lenient counsels and weak measures
 Of frail irresolution.

DARIUS.

Now proceed

To thy request.

PHARNACES.

Not I, but all request it.

Be thy imperial edict issued straight,
 And let a firm decree this day be pass'd,
 Irrevocable as our Median laws
 Ordain, that for the space of thirty days,
 No subject in thy realm shall aught request
 Of God, or man, except of thee, O king !

DARIUS.

Wherefore this strange decree ?

PHARNACES.

'Twill fix the crown

With lasting safety on thy royal brow ;
 And by a bloodless means preserve th' obedience
 Of this new empire. Think how much 'twill raise
 Thy high renown ! 'Twill make thy name rever'd,
 And popular beyond example. What !
 To be as Heav'n, dispensing good and ill

For thirty days ! With thine own ears to hear
 Thy people's wants, with thine own lib'ral hands
 To bless thy suppliant subjects ! O Darius !
 Thou'lt seem as bounteous as a giving God !
 And reign in ev'ry heart in Babylon,
 As well as Media. What a glorious state,
 To be the blessed arbiter of good ;
 The first efficient cause of happiness !
 To scatter mercies with a plenteous hand,
 And to be blest thyself in blessing others !

DARIUS.

Is this the gen'ral wish ?

[The Princes and Courtiers kneel.]

Chief PRESIDENT.

Of one, of all.

Behold thy princes, presidents and lords,
 Thy counsellors and captains ! See, O king !

[Presenting the Edict.]

Behold the instrument our zeal has drawn ;
 The edict is prepar'd. We only wait
 The confirmation of thy gracious word,
 And thy imperial signet.

DARIUS.

Say, Pharnaces,

What penalty awaits the man who dares
 Transgress our mandate ?

PHARNACES.

Instant death, O king !

This statute says, " Should any subject dare
 " Petition, for the space of thirty days,
 " Of GOD, or man, except of thee, O king !
 " He shall be thrown into yon dreadful den
 " Of hungry lions !"

DANIEL :

DARIUS.

Hold! Methinks a deed
Of such importance should be wisely weigh'd.

PHARNACES.

We have revolv'd it, mighty king, with care,
With closest scrutiny.

DARIUS.

I'm satisfied.

Then to your wisdom I commit me, princes !
Behold the royal signet ! See, 'tis done !

PHARNACES.

[*Aside.*]

There Daniel fell ! 'That signet seal'd his doom !

DARIUS.

[*After a pause.*]

Let me reflect !—Sure I have been too rash !
Why such intemperate haste ? But you are wise ;
And would not counsel this severe decree
But for the wisest purpose. Yet, methinks,
I might have weigh'd, and in my mind revolv'd
'This statute, ere, the royal signet stamp'd,
It had been past repeal ! Sage Daniel too !
My counsellor, my venerable friend,
He should have been consulted ; for his wisdom
I still have found oracular.

PHARNACES.

Mighty king !

'Tis as it should be. The decree is past,
Irrevocable as the steadfast law
Of Mede and Persian, which can never change.
'Those who observe it live, as is most meet,
High in thy grace ; who violate it, die.

 PART IV.

SCENE, DANIEL's House.

DANIEL, ARASPES.

ARASPES.

OH, holy Daniel! prophet, father, friend!
 I come, the wretched messenger of ill!
 Thy foes complot thy death. For what can mean
 This new-made law, extorted from the king
 Almost by force? What can it mean, O Daniel!
 But to involve thee in the toils they spread
 To snare thy precious life?

DANIEL.

How! was the king
 Consenting to this edict?

ARASPES.

They surpris'd
 His easy nature; took him when his heart
 Was soften'd by their blandishments! They wore
 The mask of public virtue to deceive him.
 Beneath the specious name of gen'ral good,
 They wrought him to their purposes: no time
 Allow'd him to deliberate. One short hour,
 Another moment, and his soul had gain'd
 Her natural tone of virtue.

DANIEL.

That great Pow'r
 Who suffers evil, only to produce
 Some unseen good, permits that this should be:
 And, He permitting, I, well pleas'd, resign!

Retire, my friend ! This is my second hour
 Of daily pray'r. Anon we'll meet again !
 Here, in the open face of that bright sun
 Thy fathers worshipp'd, will I offer up,
 As is my rule, petition to our God,
 For thee, for me, for Solyma, for all !

ARASPEES.

Oh, stay ! what mean'st thou ? sure thou hast not heard.
 The edict of the king ? I thought, but now,
 'Thou knew'st its purport. It expressly says,
 'That no petition shall be henceforth made,
 For thirty days, save only to the king ;
 Nor pray'r nor intercession shall be heard.
 Of any God, or man, but of Darius..

DANIEL.

And think'st thou then my rev'rence for the king,
 Good as he is, shall tempt me to renounce
 My sworn allegiance to the King of kings ?
 Hast thou commanded legions, tempted death
 In various shapes, and shrink'st at danger now ?
 Come, learn of me ; I'll teach thee to be bold,
 Though sword I never drew ! Fear not, Araspes,
 The feeble vengeance of a mortal man,
 Whose breath is in his nostrils ; for wherein
 Is he to be accounted of ? But fear
 Th' awaken'd vengeance of the living LORD ;
 He who can plunge the everlasting soul
 In infinite perdition !

ARASPEES.

Then, O Daniel !

If thou persist to disobey the edict,
 Retire, and hide thee from the prying eyes
 Of busy malice !

DANIEL.

He who is sham'd
 To vindicate the honour of his God,

Of him the living LORD shall be asham'd,
When he shall judge the tribes !

A R A S P E S.

Yet, O remember,
Oft have I heard thee say, the secret heart
Is fair Devotion's Temple ; there the faint,
Ev'n on that living altar, lights the flame
Of purest sacrifice, which burns unseen,
Not unaccepted.—I remember too,
When Syrian Naaman,* by Elitha's hand,
Was cleans'd from foul pollution, and his mind,
Enlighten'd by the miracle, confess'd
The Almighty God of Jacob, that he deem'd it
No flagrant violation of his faith
To bend at Rimmon's shrine ; nor did the Seer
Forbid the rite external.

D A N I E L.

Know, Araspes,
Heav'n deigns to suit our trials to our strength !
A recent convert, feeble in his faith,
Naaman, perhaps, had sunk beneath the weight
Of so severe a duty ; but shall I,
Shall Daniel, shall the servant of the LORD,
A vet'ran in his cause ; one train'd to know
And do his will ; one exercis'd in wo,
Bred in captivity, and born to suffer ;
Shall I, from known, from certain duty, shrink
To shun a threaten'd danger ? O, Araspes !
Shall I, advanc'd in age, in zeal decline ?
Grow careless as I reach my journey's end ?
And slacken in my pace, the goal in view ?
Perish discretion, when it interferes
With duty ! Perish the safe policy

* 2 Kings, chap. v.

Of human wit, where God's eternal name
Is put in competition ! Shall his law
Be set at nought, that I may live at ease ?
How would the heathen triumph, should I fall
'Through coward fear ! How would God's enemies
Insultingly blaspheme !

ARASPES.

Yet think a moment.

DANIEL.

No ! —————

Where evil may be *done*, 'tis right to ponder :
Where only *suffer'd*, know, the shortest pause
Is much too long. Had great Darius paus'd,
'This ill had been prevented. But for me,
Araspes ! to deliberate is to sin.

ARASPES.

Think of thy pow'r, thy favour with Darius :
Think of thy life's importance to the tribes,
Scarce yet return'd in safety. Live ! O, live
To serve the cause of God !

DANIEL.

God will sustain

Himself his righteous cause. He knows to raise
Fit instruments to serve him. As for me,
The spacious earth holds not a bait to tempt me.
What would it profit me, if I should gain
Imperial Ecbatan, th' extended land
Of fruitful Media ; nay, the world's wide round,
If my eternal soul must be the price ?
Farewell, my friend ! time presses. I have stol'n
Some moments from my duty, to confirm
And strengthen thy young faith ! Let us fulfil
What Heav'n enjoins, and leave to Heav'n th' event !

 PART V.

SCENE, The Palace.

PHARNACES, SORANUS.

PHARNACES.

'TIS done—success has crown'd our scheme, Soranus ;
 And Daniel falls into the deep-laid toils
 Our prudence spread.

SORANUS.

That he should fall so soon,
 Astonishes ev'n me ! What ! not a day,
 No, not a single moment to defer
 His rash devotions ? Madly thus to rush
 On certain peril quite transcends belief !
 When happen'd it, Pharnaces ?

PHARNACES.

On the instant :
 Scarce is the deed accomplish'd. As he made
 His ostentatious prayer, ev'n in the face
 Of the bright God of Day, all Babylon
 Beheld the insult offer'd to Darius.
 For, as in bold defiance of the law,
 His windows were not clos'd. Our chosen bands,
 Whom we had plac'd to note him, straight rush'd in,
 And seiz'd him in the warmth of his blind zeal,
 Ere half his pray'r was finish'd. Young Araspes,
 With all the wild extravagance of grief,
 Prays, weeps, and threatens. Daniel silent stands,
 With patient resignation, and prepares
 To follow them.—But see ! the king approaches !

SORANUS.

How's this ? deep sorrow fits upon his brow !
And stern resentment fires his angry eye !

DARIUS, PHARNACES, SORANUS.

DARIUS.

O, deep-laid stratagem ! O, artful wile !
To take me unprepar'd ! to wound my heart,
Ev'n where it feels most tenderly, in friendship !
To stab my fame ! to hold me up a mark
To future ages, for the perjurd prince,
Who slew the friend he lov'd ! O Daniel ! Daniel !
Who now shall trust Darius ? Not a slave
Within my empire, from the Indian main
To the cold Caspian, but is more at ease
Than I, his monarch ! I have done a deed
Will blot my honour with eternal stain !
Pharnaces ! O, thou hoary sycophant !
'Thou wily politician ! Thou hast snar'd
Thy unsuspecting master !

PHARNACES.

Great Darius !

'Let not resentment blind thy royal eyes.
In what am I to blame ? who could foresee
'This obstinate resistance to the law ?
Who could foresee that Daniel would, perforce,
Oppose the king's decree ?

DARIUS.

Thou, thou foresaw'st it !
Thou knew'st his righteous soul would ne'er endure
So long an interval of pray'r. But I,
Deluded king ! 'twas I should have foreseen
His stedfast piety. I should have thought
Your earnest warmth had some more selfish source,

Something that touch'd you nearer, than your love,
 Your counterfeited zeal for me.—Thou knew'st
 How dear I held him; how I priz'd his truth!
 Did I not choose him from a subject world,
 Unblest'd by fortune, and by birth ungrac'd,
 A captive and a Jew? and yet I lov'd him!
 Was he not rich in independent worth?
 There, there he fell! If he had been less great,
 He had been safe. Thou couldst not bear his briggtness;
 The lustre of his virtues quite obscur'd,
 And dimm'd thy fainter merit. Rash old man!
 Go, and devise some means to set me free
 From this dread load of guilt! Go, set at work
 Thy plotting genius to redeem the life
 Of venerable Daniel!

PHARNA CES.

'Tis too late.

He has offended 'gainst the new decree;
 Has dar'd to make petition to his God,
 Although the dreadful sentence of the act
 Full well he knew. And by the establish'd law
 Of Media, by that law irrevocable,
 Which he has dar'd to violate, he dies!

DARIUS.

Impiety! presumption! monstrous pride!—
 Irrevocable? Is there aught on earth
 Deserves that name? 'Th' eternal laws alone
 Of Oromasdes claim it. But, alas!
 All human projects are so faintly fram'd,
 So feebly plann'd, so liable to change,
 So mix'd with error in their very form,
 That mutable and mortal are the same.
 But where is Daniel? Wherefore comes he not
 To load me with reproaches? to upbraid me
 With all the wrongs my barb'rous haste has done him?
 Where is he?

DANIEL :

PHARNACES.

He prepares to meet his fate.
This hour he dies, for so the act decrees.

DARIUS.

Suspend the bloody sentence ! Bring him hither !
Or rather let me seek him, and implore
His dying pardon, and his parting pray'r.

PART VI.

SCENE, DANIEL'S House.

DANIEL, ARASPES.

ARASPES.

STILL let me follow thee ! still let me hear
The voice of Wisdom, ere the silver cord
By Death's cold hand be loosen'd.

DANIEL.

Now I'm ready !
No grief, no woman's weakness, good Araspes !
'Thou shouldst rejoice my pilgrimage is o'er,
And the blest haven of repose in view.

ARASPES.

And must I lose thee, Daniel ? must thou die ?

DANIEL.

And what is death, my friend, that I should fear it ?
To die ! why 'tis to triumph ; 'tis to join
The great assembly of the good and just ;
Immortal worthies, heroes, prophets, saints !

Oh ! 'tis to join the band of holy men,
 Made perfect by their suff'rings ! 'Tis to meet
 My great progenitors ! 'Tis to behold
 'Th' illustrious patriarchs ; they, with whom the Lord
 Deign'd hold familiar converse ! 'Tis to see
 Bless'd Noah and his children, once a world !
 'Tis to behold (Oh ! rapture to conceive !)
 Those we have known, and lov'd, and lost, below !
 Bold Azariah, and the band of brothers,
 Who fought, in bloom of youth, the scorching flames !
 Nor is it to behold heroic men
 Alone, who fought the fight of faith on earth ;
 But heav'nly conquerors, angelic hosts,
 Michael and his bright legions, who subdu'd
 'The foes of truth ! to join their blest employ
 Of love and praise ! To the high melodies
 Of choirs celestial to attune my voice,
 Accordant to the golden harps of saints !
 To join in bless'd hosannahs to their King !
 Whose face to see, whose glory to behold,
 Alone were heav'n, though faint or seraph none
 There were beside, and only He were there !
 This is to die ! Who would not die for this ?
 Who would not die, that he might live for ever ?

DARIUS, DANIEL, ARASPES.

DARIUS.

Where is he ? Where is Daniel ? Let me see him !
 Let me embrace that venerable form,
 Which I have doom'd to glut the greedy maw
 Of furious lions ?

DANIEL.

King Darius, hail !

DARIUS.

O, injur'd Daniel ! can I see thee thus ?
 Thus uncomplaining ? Can I bear to hear,

That when the ruffian ministers of death
 Stopp'd thy unfinish'd pray'r, thy pious lips
 Had just invok'd a blessing on Darius,
 On him who fought thy life? Thy murd'ers dropt
 Tears of strange pity. Look not on me thus
 With mild benignity! Oh! I could bear
 The voice of keen reproach, or the strong flash
 Of fierce resentment; but I cannot stand
 That touching silence, nor that patient eye
 Of meek respect!

DANIEL.

Thou art my master still.

DARIUS.

I am thy murd'rer! I have sign'd thy death!

DANIEL.

I know thy bent of soul is honourable :
 Thou hast been gracious still! Had it been otherwise,
 I would have met th' appointment of high Heav'n
 With humble acquiescence; but to know
 Thy will concurr'd not with thy servant's fate,
 Adds joy to resignation.

DARIUS.

Here I swear,
 By Him who sits enthron'd in yon bright sun,
 Thy blood shall be aton'd! On these, thy foes,
 Thou shalt have ample vengeance!

DANIEL.

Hold, O king!
 Vengeance is mine, th' eternal LORD has said;
 And I will recompense, with even hand,
 'The sinner for the sin. The wrath of man
 Works not the righteousness of God.

DARIUS.

I had hop'd

We should have trod this busy stage together
A little longer; then have sunk to rest
In honourable age! Who now shall guide
My shatter'd bark in safety? who shall now
Direct me? O, unhappy state of kings!
'Tis well the robe of majesty is gay,
Or who would put it on? A crown! what is it?
It is to bear the mis'ries of a people!
To hear their murmurs, feel their discontents,
And sink beneath a load of splendid care!
To have your best success ascrib'd to Fortune,
And Fortune's failures all ascrib'd to you!
It is to sit upon a joyless height,
To every blast of changing fate expos'd!
Too high for hope! too great for happiness!
For friendship too much fear'd! To all the joys
Of social freedom, and th' endearing charm
Of lib'ral interchange of soul unknown!
Fate meant me an exception to the rest,
And, though a monarch, blest'd me with a friend;
And I—have murder'd him!

DANIEL.

My hour approaches!

Hate not my mem'ry, king; protect Araspes.
Encourage Cyrus in the holy work
Of building ruin'd Solyma. Farewell!

DARIUS.

With most religious strictness I'll fulfil
Thy last request. Araspes shall be next
My throne and heart. Farewell! *[They embrace.]*

Hear, future kings!

Ye unborn rulers of the nations, hear!
Learn from my crime, from my misfortunes learn,

Never to trust to weak, or wicked hands,
That delegated pow'r, which Oromasdes
Invests in monarchs for the public good.

PART VII.

SCENE, The Court of the Palace.

[The sun rising.]

DARIUS, ARASPES.

DARIUS.

OH, good Araspes ! what a night of horror !
To me the dawning day brings no return
Of cheerfulness or peace ! No balmy sleep
Has seal'd these eyes, no nourishment has past
These loathing lips, since Daniel's fate was sign'd !
Hear what my fruitless penitence resolves—
The thirty days my rashness had decreed
The edict's force should last, I will devote
To mourning and repentance, fasting, pray'r,
And all due rites of grief. For thirty days
No pleasant sound of dulcimer or harp,
Sackbut, or flute, or psaltery shall charm
My ear, now dead to ev'ry note of joy !

ARASPES.

My grief can know no period !

DARIUS.

See that den !

There Daniel met the furious lions' rage !
There were the patient martyr's mangled limbs
Torn piece-meal ! Never hide thy tears, Araspes ;

'Tis virtuous sorrow, unallay'd like mine
 By guilt and fell remorse ! Let us approach.
 Who knows but that dread Pow'r, to whom he pray'd
 So often and so fervently, has heard him !

[He goes to the mouth of the den.]

O, Daniel ! servant of the living God !
 He whom thou hast serv'd so long, and lov'd so well,
 From the devouring lions' famish'd jaw
 Can he deliver thee ?

DANIEL. *[From the bottom of the den.]*
 He can ! he has !

DARIUS.

Methought I heard him speak !

ARASPES.

O wondrous force

Of strong imagination ! Were thy voice
 Loud as the trumpet's blast, it could not wake him
 From that eternal sleep !

DANIEL. *[In the den.]*

Hail ! king Darius !

The God I serve has shut the lion's mouth,
 To vindicate my innocence.

DARIUS.

He speaks !

He lives !

ARASPES.

'Tis no illusion ! 'tis the sound
 Of his known voice.

DARIUS.

Where are my servants ? haste,
 Fly swift as light'ning, free him from the den,

Release him, bring him hither. Break the seal
Which keeps him from me ! See, Araspes ! look !
See the charm'd lions !—Mark their mild demeanor !
Araspes, mark !—they have no pow'r to hurt him !
See how they hang their heads, and smoothe their fierceness
At his mild aspect !

A R A S P E S.

Who that sees this fight,
Who that in after-times shall hear this told,
Can doubt if Daniel's God be God indeed ?

D A R I U S.

None, none, Araspes.

A R A S P E S.

Ah ! he comes ; he comes !

Enter DANIEL, followed by multitudes.

D A N I E L.

Hail, great Darius !

D A R I U S.

Dost thou live indeed ?

And live unhurt ?

A R A S P E S.

O, miracle of joy ?

D A R I U S.

I scarce can trust my eyes ! How didst thou 'scape ?

D A N I E L.

That bright and glorious Being, who vouchsaf'd
Presence divine, when the three martyr'd brothers
Essay'd the caldron's flame, supported me !
Ev'n in the furious lions' dreadful den,
The prisoner of hope, even there I turn'd
To the strong hold, the bulwark of my strength,
Ready to hear, and mighty to redeem !

DARIUS. *[To Araspes.*

Where is Pharnaces ! Take the hoary traitor ;
Take too Soranus, and the chief abettors
Of this dire edict. Let not one escape.
The punishment their deep-laid hate devis'd
For holy Daniel, on their heads shall fall
With tenfold vengeance. To the lion's den
I doom his vile accusers ! All their wives,
'Their children too, shall share one common fate !
'Take care that none escape.—Go, good Araspes.

DANIEL. *[Araspes goes out.*
Not so, Darius.

O spare the guiltless ; spare the guilty too !
Where sin is not, to punish were unjust ;
And where sin is, O king ! there fell remorse
Supplies the place of punishment !

DARIUS.

No more !

My word is past ! Not one request, save this,
Shalt thou e'er make in vain. Approach, my friends,
Araspes has already spread the tale,
And see, what crowds advance.

PEOPLE.

Long live Darius !

Long live great Daniel too, the people's friend !

DARIUS.

Draw near, my subjects. See this holy man !
Death had no pow'r to harm him. Yon fell band
Of famish'd lions, soften'd at his sight,
Forgot their nature and grew tame before him.
The mighty God protects his servants thus !
The righteous thus he rescues from the snare
Of death ; while fraud's artifice shall fall
In the deep gulf his wily arts devise
To snare the innocent !

A COURTIER.

To the same den

Araspes bears Pharnaces and his friends ;
 Fall'n is their insolence ! With pray'rs and tears,
 And all the meannesses of high-crested pride,
 When adverse fortune frowns, they beg for life.
 Araspes will not hear. " You heard not me,
 He cries, when I for Daniel's life implor'd ;
 His God protected him ! See now, if yours
 Will listen to your cries ? "

DARIUS.

Now hear,

People, and nations, languages and realms,
 O'er whom I rule ; Peace be within your walls !
 That I may banish from the minds of men
 The rash decree gone out ; hear me resolve
 To counteract its force by one more just.
 In ev'ry kingdom of my wide-stretch'd realm,
 From fair Chaldea to the extremest bound
 Of northern Media, be my edict sent,
 And this my statute known. My heralds haste,
 And spread my royal mandate through the land,
 That all my subjects bow the ready knee
 To Daniel's GOD—for he alone is LORD.
 Let all adore, and tremble at his name,
 Who sits in glory unapproachable
 Above the heav'ns—above the heav'n of heavens !
 His pow'r is everlasting ; and his throne,
 Founded in equity and truth, shall last
 Beyond the bounded reign of time and space,
 Through wide eternity ! With his right arm
 He saves, and who opposes ? He defends,
 And who shall injure ? In the perilous den
 He rescued Daniel from the lion's mouth !
 His common deeds are wonders, and his works,
 One ever-during chain of miracles !

Enter ARASPES.

ARASPES.

All hail, O king ! Darius, live forever !
May all thy foes be as Pharnaces is !

DARIUS.

Araspes, speak.

ARASPES.

O, let me spare the tale !
'Tis full of horror ! Dreadful was the fight !
The hungry lions, greedy for their prey,
Devour'd the wretched princes, ere they reach'd
The bottom of the den.

DARIUS.

Now, now confess,
'Twas some superior hand restrain'd their rage,
And tam'd their furious appetites.

PEOPLE.

'Tis true !
The God of Daniel is a mighty God !
He saves, and he destroys.

ARASPES.

O, friend ! O, Daniel !
No wav'ring doubts can ever more disturb
My settled faith.

DANIEL.

To God be all the glory !

THE END.

REFLECTIONS

O F

King Hezekiah,

IN HIS SICKNESS.

Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die.

ISAIAH, xxxviii.

WHAT, and no more?—Is this my soul, said I,
My whole of being?—Must I surely die?
Be robb'd at once of health, of strength, of time,
Of youth's fair promise, and of pleasure's prime?
Shall I no more behold the face of morn,
'The cheerful day-light, and the spring's return?
Must I the festive bow'r, the banquet leave,
For the dull chambers of the darksome grave?

Have I consider'd what it is to die?
In native dust with kindred worms to lie;
To sleep in cheerless cold neglect; to rot;
My body loath'd, my very name forgot!
Nor one of all those parasites, who bend
'The supple knee, their monarch to attend!
What, not one friend! No, not an hireling slave,
Shall hail GREAT HEZEKIAH in the grave!
Where's he, who falsely claim'd the name of Great?
Whose eye was terror, and whose frown was fate?
Who aw'd an hundred nations from the throne?
See where he lies, dumb, friendless, and alone!
Which grain of dust proclaims the noble birth?
Which is the royal particle of earth?
Where are the marks, the princely ensigns where?
Which is the slave, and which great David's heir?

Alas ! the beggar's ashes are not known
From his, who lately sat on Israel's throne ?

How stands my great account ? My soul survey
The debt ETERNAL JUSTICE bids thee pay !
Should I frail Memory's records strive to blot,
Will Heav'n's tremendous reck'ning be forgot ?
Can I, alas ! the awful volume tear ?
Or raze one page of the dread register ?

*" Prepare thy house, thy heart in order set ;
" Prepare, the Judge of Heaven and Earth to meet."*
So spake the warning Prophet.—Awful words !
Which fearfully my troubled soul records.
Am I prepar'd ? and *can* I meet my doom,
Nor shudder at the dreaded wrath to come ?
Is all in order set, my house, my heart ?
Does no besetting sin still claim a part ?
Does no one cherish'd vice, with ling'ring pace,
Reluctant leave me to the work of grace ?
Did I each day for this great day prepare,
By righteous deeds, by sin-subduing pray'r ?
Did I each night, each day's offence repent,
And each unholy thought and word lament ?
Still have these ready hands th' afflicted fed,
And minister'd to Want her daily bread ?
The cause, I knew not, did I well explore ?
Friend, advocate, and parent of the poor ?
Did I, to gratify some sudden gust
Of thoughtless appetite ; some impious lust
Of pleasure or of power, such sums employ
As would have crown'd pale penury with joy ?
Did I in groves forbidden altars raise,
Or molten gods adore, or idols praise ?
Did my firm faith to Heav'n still point the way ?
Did charity to man my actions sway ?
Did meek eyed Patience all my steps attend ?
Did gen'rous Candour mark me for her friend ?
Did I unjustly seek to build my name
On the pil'd ruins of another's fame ?

Did I, like hell, abhor th' insidious lie,
 The low deceit, th' unmanly calumny ?
 Did my fix'd soul the impious wit detest ?
 Did my firm virtue scorn th' unhallow'd jest ;
 The sneer profane, and the poor ridicule
 Of shallow Infidelity's dull school ?
 Did I still live as born one day to die,
 And view th' eternal world with constant eye ?

If so I liv'd, if so I kept thy word,
 In mercy view, in mercy hear me, LORD !
 My holiest deeds *indulgence* will require,
 The best but to *forgiveness* will aspire ;
 If thou my purest services regard,
 'Twill be with pardon only, not reward !

How imperfection's stamp'd on all below !
 How sin intrudes on all we say or do !
 How late in all the insolence of health,
 I charm'd th' Assyrian * by my boast of wealth !
 How fondly, with elab'rate pomp, display'd
 My glitt'ring treasures ! with what triumph laid
 My gold and gems before his dazzled eyes,
 And found a rich reward in his surprise !
 O, mean of soul ! can wealth elate the heart,
 Which of the man himself is not a part ?
 O, poverty of pride ! O, foul disgrace !
 Disgusted Reason, blushing, hides her face.
 Mortal, and proud ! strange contradicting terms !
 Pride for Death's victim, for the prey of worms !
 Of all the wonders which th' eventful life
 Of man presents ; of all the mental strife
 Of warring passions ; all the raging fires
 Of furious appetites, and mad desires,
 Not one so strange appears as this alone,
 That man is proud of what is not his own.

* This is an anachronism. Hezekiah did not shew his treasures to the Assyrian till after his recovery from his sickness.

How short is human life ! the very breath,
 Which frames my words, accelerates my death.
 Of this short life how large a portion's fled !
 To what is gone I am already dead ;
 As dead to all my years and minutes past,
 As I, to what remains, shall be at last.
 Can I my cares and pains so far forget,
 To view my vanish'd years with fond regret ?
 Can I again my worn-out fancy cheat ?
 Indulge fresh hope ? solicit new deceit ?
 Of all the vanities weak man admires,
 Which greatness gives, or sanguine youth desires,
 Of these, my soul, which hast thou not enjoy'd ?
 With each, with all, thy fated pow'rs are cloy'd.
 What can I then expect from length of days ?
 More wealth, more wisdom, pleasure, health, or praise ?
 More pleasure ! hope not that, deluded king ?
 For when did age increase of pleasure bring ?
 Is health, of years prolong'd the common boast ?
 And dear-earn'd praise, is it not cheaply lost ?
 More wisdom ! that indeed were happiness ;
 That were a wish a king might well confess :
 But when did Wisdom covet length of days ;
 Or seek its bliss in pleasure, wealth, or praise ?
 No :——Wisdom views with an indifferent eye
 All finite joys, all blessings born to die.
 The soul on earth is an immortal guest,
 Compell'd to starve at an unreal feast :
 A spark, which upward tends by nature's force ;
 A stream, diverted from its parent source ;
 A drop, dis sever'd from the boundless sea ;
 A moment, parted from eternity ;
 A pilgrim, panting for the rest to come ;
 An exile, anxious for his native home.

Why should I ask my forfeit life to save ?
 Is Heav'n unjust, which dooms me to the grave ?
 Was I with hope of endless days deceiv'd ?
 Or of lov'd life am I alone-bereav'd ?

Let all the great, the rich, the learn'd, the wise,
 Let all the shades of Judah's monarchs rise;
 And say, if genius, learning, empire, wealth,
 Youth, beauty, virtue, strength, renown, or health,
 Has once revers'd th' immutable decree
 On Adam pass'd, of man's mortality?
 What—have these eyes ne'er seen the felon worm
 The damask cheek devour, the finish'd form?
 On the pale rose of blasted beauty feed,
 And riot on the lip so lately red?
 Where are our fathers? Where th' illustrious line
 Of holy prophets, and of men divine?
 Live they forever? Do they shun the grave?
 Or when did Wisdom its professor save?
 When did the brave escape? When did the breath
 Of Eloquence charm the dull ear of Death?
 When did the cunning argument avail,
 'The polish'd period, or the varnish'd tale;
 'The eye of lightning, or the soul of fire,
 Which thronging thousands crowded to admire?
 Ev'n while we praise the verse, the poet dies;
 And silent as his lyre great David lies.
 'Thou, bless'd Isaiah! who, at God's command,
 Now speak'st repentance to a guilty land,
 Must die! as wise and good thou hadst not been,
 As Nebat's son, who taught the land to sin!

And shall *I*, then, be spar'd? O monstrous pride!
 Shall I escape, when Solomon has died?
 If all the worth of all the saints was vain—
 Peace, peace, my troubled soul, nor dare complain!
 LORD! I submit. Complete thy gracious will!
 For if thou slay me,* I will trust thee still.
 O be my will so swallow'd up in thine,
 That I may do *thy* will in doing *mine*.

* Job.

Sensibility :

A

POETICAL EPISTLE

TO THE

HON. MRS. BOSCAWEN.*

Spirits are not finely touch'd
But to fine issues————

SHAKESPEARE.

ACCEPT, BOSCAWEN ! these unpolish'd lays,
Nor blame too much the verse you cannot praise,
For you far other bards have wak'd the string ;
Far other bards for you were wont to sing.
Yet on the gale their parting music steals,
Yet, your charm'd ear the lov'd impression feels.
You heard the lyres of LYTTLETON and YOUNG ;
And this a Grace, and that a Seraph string.
These are no more ! But not with these decline
The Attic chasten'd, and the flame divine.
Still, *sad† Elfrida's Poet* shall complain,
And either WARTON breathe his classic strain.
Nor fear lest genuine poesy expire,
While tuneful BEATTIE wakes old Spenser's lyre.
His sympathetic lay his soul reveals,
And paints the perfect *Bard* from what he feels.

Illustrious LOWTH !‡ for him the muses wove,
The fairest garland from the greenest grove.
Tho' Latian bards had gloried in his name,
When in full brightness burnt the Latian flame ;
Yet, fir'd with nobler hopes than transient Bays,
He scorn'd the meed of perishable praise ;
Spurn'd the cheap wreath by human science won,
Borne on the wing sublime of Amos' son :

* This little Poem was sent several years ago, as an Epistle, to the honoured Friend to whom it is inscribed. It has since been enlarged ; and several passages have been added, or altered, as circumstances required.

† Milton calls Euripides——*Sad Elfrida's Poet*.

‡ The Bishop of London.

He seiz'd his mantle as the Prophet flew,
And with his mantle caught his spirit too.

To snatch bright beauty from devouring fate,
And bid it boast with him a deathless date;
To shew how Genius fires, how Taste restrains,
While what both are his pencil best explains,
Have we not REYNOLDS? * Lives not JENYNS yet,
To prove his lowest title was a Wit?
'Tho' purer flames thy hallow'd zeal inspire
Than e'er were kindled at the Muse's fire;
Thee, mitred † CHESTER! all the Nine shall boast:
And is not JOHNSON theirs, himself an host?

Yes:—still for you your gentle stars dispense
The charm of friendship, and the feast of sense.
Yours is the bliss, and Heav'n no dearer sends,
To call the wisest, brightest, best—your friends.

With CARTER trace the wit to Athens known,
Or find in MONTAGU that wit our own.
Or, pleas'd, attend CHAPONE's instructive page;
Which charms her own, and forms the rising age.
Or boast in WALSINGHAM the various pow'r,
'To soothe the lonely, grace the letter'd hour;
To polish'd life its highest charm she gives,
Whose song is music, and whose canvass lives.
DELANY shines, in worth serenely bright,
Wisdom's strong ray, and Virtue's milder light;
And she who bless'd the friend, and grac'd the page
Of Swift, still lends her lustre to our age:
Long, long protract thy light, O star benign!
Whose setting beams with added brightness shine!

O, much lov'd BARBAULD! shall my heart refuse
Its tribute to thy Virtues and thy Muse?
While round thy brow the Poet's wreath I twine,
'This humble merit shall at least be mine,
In all thy praise to take a gen'rous part;
Thy laurels bind thee closer to my heart:
My verse thy merits to the world shall teach,
And love the genius it despairs to reach.

Yet, what is wit, and what the Poet's art?
Can Genius shield the vulnerable heart?
Ah, no! where bright imagination reigns,
'The fine wrought spirit feels acuter pains:
Where glow exalted sense, and taste refin'd,

* See his Discourses to the Academy.

† See the Bishop's admirable Poem on Death.

There keener anguish rankles in the mind :
 There feeling is diffus'd thro' ev'ry part,
 Thrills in each nerve, and lives in all the heart :
 And those, whose gen'rous souls each tear would keep
 From others' eyes, are born themselves to weep.

Say, can the boasted pow'rs of wit and song,
 Of life one pang remove, one hour prolong ?
 Presumptuous hope ! which daily truths deride ;
 For you, alas ! have wept—and GARRICK dy'd !
 Ne'er shall my heart his lov'd remembrance lose,
 Guide, critic, guardian, glory of my muse !
 Oh, shades of Hampton ! witness as I mourn,
 Could wit or song elude *his* destin'd urn ?
 Tho' living virtue still your haunts endears,
 Yet bury'd worth shall justify my tears !
 GARRICK ! those pow'rs which form a friend were thine ;
 And let me add, with pride, that friend was mine :
 With pride ! at once the vain emotion's fled ;
 Far other thoughts are sacred to the dead.

Who now with spirit keen, yet judgment cool,
 Th' unequal wand'rings of my muse shall rule ?
 Whose partial praise my worthless verse ensure ?
 For Candor smil'd, when GARRICK would endure.
 If harsher critics were compell'd to blame,
 I gain'd in friendship what I lost in fame ;
 And friendship's soft'ring smiles can well repay
 What critic rigour justly takes away.
 With keen acumen how his piercing eye
 The fault, conceal'd from vulgar view, would spy !
 While with a gen'rous warmth he strove to hide,
 Nay vindicate, the fault his judgment spied.
 So pleas'd, could he detect a happy line,
 That he would fancy merit ev'n in mine.
 Oh gen'rous error, when by friendship bred !
 His praises flatter'd me, but not misled.

No narrow views could bound his lib'ral mind ;
 His friend was man, his party human kind.
 Agreed in this, opposing statesmen strove
 Who most should gain his praise, or court his love.
 His worth all hearts as to one centre drew ;
 Thus Tully's Atticus was Cæsar's too.

His wit so keen it never miss'd its end ;
 So blameless too, it never lost a friend ;
 So chaste, that Modesty ne'er learn'd to fear ;
 So pure, Religion might unwounded hear.

How his quick mind, strong pow'rs, and ardent heart,
 Impoverish'd nature, and exhausted art,
 A brighter bard records,* a deathless muse !—
 But I his talents in his virtues lose :
 Great parts are Nature's gift ; but that he shone
 Wife, moral, good and virtuous—was his own.
 Tho' Time his silent hand across has stole,
 Soft'ning the tints of sorrow on the soul ;
 The deep impression long my heart shall fill,
 And every mellow'd trace be perfect still.

Forgive, BOSCAWEN, if my sorrowing heart,
 Intent on grief, forget the rules of art ;
 Forgive, if wounded recollection melt—
 You best can pardon who have oft'nest felt.
 You, who for many a friend and hero mourn,
 Who bend in anguish o'er the frequent urn ;
 You, who have found how much the feeling heart
 Shapes its own wound, and points itself the dart ;
 You, who from tender sad experience feel
 The wounds such minds receive can never heal ;
 That grief a thousand entrances can find,
 Where parts superior dignify the mind ;
 Would you renounce the pangs those feelings give,
 Secure in joyless apathy to live?

For tho' in souls, where taste and sense abound,
 Pain thro' a thousand avenues can wound ;
 Yet the same avenues are open still,
 To casual blessings as to casual ill.
 Nor is the trembling temper more awake
 To every wound which misery can make,
 Than is the finely-fashion'd nerve alive
 To every transport pleasure has to give.
 For if, when home-felt joys the mind elate,
 It mourns in secret for another's fate ;
 Yet when its own sad griefs invade the breast,
 Abroad, in others blessings, see it blest !
 Ev'n the soft sorrow of remember'd woe
 A not unpleasing sadness may bestow.

Let not the vulgar read this pensive strain,
 Their jests the tender anguish would profane :
 Yet these some deem the happiest of their kind,
 Whose low enjoyments never reach'd the mind ;
 Who ne'er a pain but for themselves have known,
 Nor ever felt a sorrow but their own ;
 Who call romantic every finer thought,
 Conceiv'd by pity, or by friendship wrought.

Ah ! wherefore happy ? where's the kindred mind ?
 Where, the large soul that takes in human kind ?
 Where, the best passions of the mortal breast ?
 Where, the warm blessing when another's blest ?
 Where, the soft lenitives of others' pain,
 The social sympathy, the sense humane ?
 The sigh of rapture, and the tear of joy,
 Anguish that charms, and transports that destroy ?
 For tender Sorrow has her pleasures too ;
 Pleasures, which prosp'rous Dulness never knew.
 She never knew, in all her coarser bliss,
 The sacred rapture of a pain like this !
 Nor think, the cautious only are the just ;
 Who never was deceiv'd I would not trust.
 Then take, ye happy vulgar ; take your part
 Of sordid joy, which never touch'd the heart.
 Benevolence, which seldom stays to choose,
 Lest pausing Prudence teach her to refuse ;
 Friendship, which once determin'd, never swerves,
 Weighs ere it trusts, but weighs not ere it serves ;
 And soft-eyed Pity, and Forgiveness bland,
 And melting Charity with open hand ;
 And artless Love, believing and believ'd,
 And gen'rous Confidence which ne'er deceiv'd ;
 And Mercy stretching out, ere Want can speak,
 To wipe the tear from pale Affliction's cheek ;
 These ye have never known !—then take your part
 Of sordid joy, which never touch'd the heart.

Ye, who have melted in bright Glory's flame,
 Or felt the spirit-stirring breath of fame !
 Ye noble few ! in whom her promis'd meed
 Wakes the great thought, and makes the wish the deed !
 Ye, who have tasted the delight to give,
 And, God's own agents, bid the wretched live ;
 Who the chill haunts of Desolation seek,
 Raise the sunk heart, and flush the fading cheek !
 Ye, who, with pensive Petrarch, love to mourn,
 Or weave fresh chaplets for Tibullus' urn ;
 Who cherish both in Hammond's plaintive lay,
 The Provence myrtle, and the Roman bay !
 Ye, who divide the joys, and share the pains
 Which merit feels, or Heav'n-born Fancy feigns ;
 Would you renounce such joys, such pains as these,
 For vulgar pleasures, or for selfish ease ?
 Would you, to 'scape the pain the joy forego ;
 And miss the transport, to avoid the woe ?
 Would you the sense of real sorrow lose,
 Or cease to woo the melancholy Muse ?

No, Greville !* no !—Thy song tho' steep'd in tears,
 Tho' all thy soul in all thy strain appears ;
 Yet wouldst thou all thy well-sung anguish choose,
 And all th' inglorious peace thou begg'st, refuse.

Or you, BOSCAWEN ! when you fondly melt,
 In raptures none but mothers ever felt ;
 And view, enamour'd, in your beauteous race,
 All LEVESON's sweetness, and all BEAUFORT's grace !
 Yet think what dangers each lov'd child may share,
 The youth if valiant, and the maid if fair ;
 That perils multiply as blessings flow,
 And constant sorrows on enjoyments grow :
 You, who have felt how fugitive is joy,
 That while we clasp the phantom we destroy :
 That life's bright sun is dimm'd by clouded views,
 And who have most to love have most to lose ;
 Yet from these fair possessions would you part,
 To shield from future pain your guarded heart ?
 Would your fond mind renounce its tender boast,
 Or wish their op'ning bloom of promise lost ?
 Yield the dear hopes, which break upon your view,
 For all the quiet, Dulness ever new ?
 Debase the objects of your tend'rest pray'r,
 To save the dangers of a distant care ?
 Consent, to shun the anxious fears you prove ;
 They less should merit, or you less should love ?

Yet, while I hail the Sympathy Divine,
 Which makes, O man ! the wants of others thine ;
 I mourn heroic JUSTICE, scarcely own'd,
 And PRINCIPLE for SENTIMENT dethron'd.
 While FEELING boasts her ever-tearful eye,
 Stern TRUTH, firm FAITH, and manly VIRTUE fly.
 Sweet SENSIBILITY ! thou soothing pow'r,
 Who shedd'st thy blessings on the natal hour,
 Like fairy favours ! Art can never seize,
 Nor Affectation catch thy pow'r to please :
 Thy subtle essence still eludes the chains
 Of Definition, and defeats her pains.
 Sweet Sensibility ! thou keen delight !
 Thou hasty moral ! sudden sense of right !
 Thou untaught goodness ! Virtue's precious seed !
 Thou sweet precursor of the gen'rous deed !
 Beauty's quick relish ! Reason's radiant morn,
 Which dawns soft light before Reflection's born !
 To those who know thee not, no words can paint !
 And those who know thee, know all words are faint !

'Tis not to mourn because a sparrow dies ;
 To rave in artificial extacies :
 'Tis not to melt in tender *Otway's* fires ;
 'Tis not to faint, when injur'd *Shore* expires :
 'Tis not because the ready eye o'erflows
 At *Clementina's*, or *Clarissa's* woes.

Forgive, O RICHARDSON ! nor think I mean,
 With cold contempt, to blast thy peerless scene :
 If some faint love of virtue glow in me,
 Pure spirit ! I first caught that flame from thee.

While soft Compassion silently relieves,
 Loquacious *Feeling* hints how much she gives ;
 Laments how oft her wounded heart has bled,
 And boasts of many a tear she never shed.

As words are but th' external marks, to tell
 The fair ideas in the mind that dwell ;
 And only are of things the outward sign,
 And not the things themselves, they but define ;
 So exclamations, tender tones, fond tears,
 And all the graceful drapery Pity wears ;
 These are not Pity's self, they but express
 Her inward sufferings by their pictur'd dress ;
 And these fair marks, reluctant I relate,
 These lovely symbols may be counterfeit.
 Celestial Pity ! why must I deplore,
 Thy sacred image stamp'd on basest ore ?
 There are, who fill with brilliant plaints the page,
 If a poor linnet meet the gunner's rage :
 There are, who for a dying fawn display
 The tend'rest anguish in the sweetest lay ;
 Who for a wounded animal deplore,
 As if friend, parent, country were no more ;
 Who boast quick rapture trembling in their eye,
 If from the spider's snare they save a fly ;
 Whose well-lung sorrows every breast inflame,
 And break all hearts but his from whom they came ;
 Yet, scorning life's *du'l* duties to attend,
 Will persecute a wife or wrong a friend ;
 Alive to every wo by *fiction* dress'd ;
 The innocent he wrong'd, the wretch distress'd,
 May plead in vain ; their sufferings come not near,
 Or he relieves them cheaply, with a tear.
 Not so the tender moralist* of Tweed ;
 His *Man of Feeling* is a man indeed.

* Mr. Mackenzie, author of the *Mirror*, *Man of Feeling*, &c.

Oh, blest'd Compassion ! Angel Charity !
 More dear one genuine deed perform'd for thee,
 Than all the periods Feeling e'er can turn,
 Than all thy soothing pages, polish'd STERNE !

Not that by deeds alone this love's exprest,
 If so, the affluent only were the blest.
 One silent wish, one prayer, one soothing word,
 The precious page of Mercy shall record ;
 One soul-felt sigh by pow'rless Pity giv'n,
 Accepted incense ! shall ascend to Heav'n.

Since trifles make the sum of human things,
 And half our mis'ry from our foibles springs ;
 Since life's best joys consist in peace and ease,
 And few can save or serve, but all may please ;
 Oh ! let the ungentle spirit learn from hence,
 A small unkindness is a great offence.
 Large bounties to bestow we wish in vain,
 But all may shun the guilt of giving pain.
 To bless mankind with tides of flowing wealth,
 With pow'r to grace them, or to crown with health,
 Our little lot denies ; but Heav'n decrees
 To all, the gift of ministr'ing to ease.
 The gentle offices of patient love,
 Beyond all flatt'ry, and all price above ;
 The mild forbearance at another's fault,
 The taunting word, suppress'd as soon as thought ;
 On these Heav'n bade the bliss of life depend,
 And crush'd ill-fortune when he made a FRIEND.

A solitary blessing few can find,
 Our joys with those we love are intertwin'd ;
 And he, whose helpful tenderness removes
 Th' obstructing thorn which wounds the breast he loves,
 Smooths not another's rugged path alone,
 But scatters roses to adorn his own.

The hint malevolent, the look oblique,
 The obvious satire, or implied dislike ;
 The sneer equivocal, the harsh reply,
 And all the cruel language of the eye ;
 The artful injury, whose venom'd dart,
 Scarce wounds the hearing while it stabs the heart ;
 The guarded phrase whose meaning kills, yet told,
 The list'ner wonders how you thought it cold ;
 Small slights, contempt, neglect unmix'd with hate.
 Make up in number what they want in weight.
 These, and a thousand griefs minute as these,
 Corrode our comfort, and destroy our ease.

As this strong feeling tends to good or ill,
 It give fresh pow'r to vice or principle ;
 'Tis not peculiar to the wise and good ;
 'Tis passion's flame, the virtue of the blood.
 But to divert it to its proper course,
 There Wisdom's pow'r appears, there Reason's force ;
 If, ill-directed, it pursues the wrong,
 It adds new strength to what before was strong ;
 Breaks out in wild irregular desires,
 Disorder'd passions, and illicit fires.
 But if the virtuous bias rule the soul,
 This lovely feeling then adorns the whole ;
 Sheds its sweet sunshine on the moral part,
 Nor wastes on fancy what should warm the heart.
 Cold and inert the mental pow'rs would lie,
 Without this quick'ning spark of Deity.
 To draw the rich materials from the mine,
 To bid the mass of intellect refine ;
 To melt the firm, to animate the cold,
 And Heav'n's own impress stamp on nature's gold ;
 To give immortal MIND its finest tone,
 Oh, SENSIBILITY ! is all thy own.
 THIS is th' ethereal flame which lights and warms,
 In song transports us, and in action charms.
 'Tis THIS that makes the pensive strains of GRAY*
 Win to the open heart their easy way.
 Makes the touch'd spirit glow with kindred fire,
 When sweet SERENA's† poet wakes the lyre.
 'Tis THIS, tho' Nature's hidden treasures lie,
 Bare to the keen inspection of her eye,
 Makes PORTLAND's face its brightest rapture wear,
 When her large bounty smooths the bed of care.
 'Tis THIS that breathes thro' SEVIGNE's sweet page,
 That nameless grace which soothes a second age.
 'Tis THIS, whose charms the soul resistless seize,
 And gives BOSCAWEN half her pow'r to please.

Yet, why those terrors ? why that anxious care,
 Since your last ‡ hope the deathful war will dare ?
 Why dread that energy of soul which leads
 To dang'rous glory by heroic deeds ?
 Why tremble lest this ardent soul aspire ?—
 You fear the son because you knew the sire.
 Hereditary valour you deplore,
 And dread, yet wish to find one hero more.

* This is meant of the Elegy in a Country Church Yard : of which exquisite Poem, Sensibility is, perhaps, the characteristic beauty.

† Triumphs of Temper.

‡ Viscount Falmouth, Admiral Boscawen's only remaining son, was then in America, and at the battle of Lexington.



THE

SEARCH

AFTER

HAPPINES:

A

PASTORAL DRAMA.

A NEW EDITION.

“ To rear the tender thought,
“ To teach the young idea how to shoot,
“ To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
“ To breathe th' enliv'ning Spirit, and to fix
“ The gen'rous Purpose in the FEMALE breast.”

THOMSON.

BOSTON:

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1801.



TO

MRS. G W A T K I N.

DEAR MADAM,

AS the following little Poem turns chiefly on the danger of *delay*, or *error*, in the important article of *Education*, I know not to whom I can, with more propriety, dedicate it, than to you ; as the subject it inculcates has been one of the principal objects of your attention in your own family. Let not the name of *Dedication* alarm you : I am not going to offend you, by making your eulogium. Panegyric is only necessary to suspicious, or common characters : Virtue will not accept it : Modesty will not offer it.

The friendship with which you have honoured me from childhood, will, I flatter myself, induce you to pardon me for venturing, without your permission, to lay before you this public testimony of my esteem, and to assure you, how much I am,

Dear Madam,

Your obedient,

And obliged humble servant,

HANNAH MORE.

BRISTOL, }
May 10, 1773.



P R E F A C E.

IT has been so hackneyed a practice for Authors to pretend, that imperfect copies of their works had crept abroad, that the Writer of the following Pastoral is almost ashamed to allege this, as the real cause of the present publication. This little Poem was composed several years ago, (the Author's age eighteen) and recited at that time, and since, by a party of young Ladies, for which purpose it was originally written; by this means, some mutilated copies were circulated, unknown to the Author, through many hands.

She is sensible it has many imperfections, but if it may be happily instrumental in promoting a regard to Religion and Virtue in the minds of Young Persons, and afford them an innocent, and perhaps not altogether unuseful amusement in the exercise of recitation, the end for which it was originally composed, and her utmost wish in its publication, will be fully answered.



P R O L O G U E,

Spoken by a YOUNG LADY at a private Representation.

W I T H trembling diffidence, with modest fear,
Before this gentle audience we appear.
Ladies ! survey us with a tender eye,
Put on good-nature, and lay judgment by.
No deep-laid Plot adorns our humble page,
But scenes adapted to our sex and age.
Simplicity is all our Author's aim,
She does not write, nor do *we* speak for *fame*.
To make Amusement and Instruction friends,
A lesson in the guise of play she sends ;
She claims no merit, but her love of truth,
No plea to favour, but her *sex* and *youth* :
With these alone to boast, she sends me here,
To beg your kind, indulgent, partial ear.
Of critic *man* she could not stand the test,
But you with softer, gentler hearts are blest'd :
With *him* she dares not rest her feeble cause,
A mark too low for satire or applause.

Ladies, protect her—do not be satiric,
Spare censure, she expects not panegyric.

THE

Characters of the Pastoral.

EUPHELIA,	}	Four young Ladies of Distinction in Search of Happiness.
CLEORA,		
PASTORELLA,		
LAURINDA,		
URANIA,		An ancient Shepherdess.
SYLVIA,	}	Her Daughters.
ELIZA,		
FLORELLA,		A young Shepherdess.

THE
Search after Happiness.

A
PASTORAL DRAMA.

SCENE, A GROVE.

EUPHELIA, CLEORA, PASTORELLA,
LAURINDA.

CLEORA.

WELCOME, ye humble vales, ye flow'ry shades,
Ye crystal fountains, and ye silent glades !
From the gay misery of the thoughtless great ;
The walks of folly, the disease of state ;
From scenes, where daring guilt triumphant reigns,
Its dark suspicions, and its hoard of pains ;
Where pleasure never comes without alloy,
And art but thinly paints fallacious joy ;
Where languor loads the day, excess the night,
And dull satiety succeeds delight ;
Where midnight vices their fell orgies keep,
And guilty revels scare the phantom Sleep ;
Where dissipation wears the name of bliss ;
From these we fly in search of Happiness.

EUPHELIA.

Not the tir'd Pilgrim, all his dangers past,
When he descries the long-sought shrine at last,
E'er felt a joy so pure, as this fair field,
These peaceful shades, and smiling vallies yield ;
For sure these oaks, which old as time appear,
Proclaim *Urania's* lonely dwelling near.

PASTORELLA.

How the description with the scene agrees !
 Here lowly thickets, there aspiring trees,
 The hazel copse excluding noon-day's beam,
 The tufted arbor, the pellucid stream,
 The blooming sweet-briar, and the hawthorn shade,
 The springing cowslips and the daisied mead,
 The wild luxuriance of the full-blown fields,
 Which spring prepares and laughing summer yields.

EUPHELIA.

Here simple nature strikes th' enraptur'd eye
 With charms, which wealth and art but ill supply ;
 The genuine graces, which *without* we find,
 Display the beauty of the owner's *mind*.

LAURINDA.

These deep embow'ring shades conceal the cell
 Where sage *Urania*, and her daughters dwell :
Florella too, if right we've heard the tale,
 With them resides—the lily of the vale.

CLEORA.

But soft, what gentle female form appears ?
 Which smiles of more than mortal beauty wears :
 Is it the guardian genius of the grove ?
 Or some fair Angel from the choirs above ?

Enter FLORELLA, who speaks.

Whom do I see ?—ye beauteous virgins say,
 What chance conducts your steps this lonely way ?
 Do you pursue some fav'rite lambkin stray'd,
 Or do yon alders court you to their shade ?
 Declare, fair strangers, if aright I deem,
 No rustic nymphs of vulgar rank you seem.

CLEORA.

No cooling shades allure our eager sight,
 Nor lambkins lost, our searching steps invite.

FLORELLA.

Or is it, haply, yonder branching vine,
 Whose trunk the woodbine's fragrant tendrils twine,
 Whose spreading height with purple clusters crown'd,
 Attracts the gaze of every nymph around?
 Have these lone regions aught that charms, beside
 Florella's shades, her flow'rs, her fleecy pride?

EUPHELIA.

Florella! our united thanks receive,
 Sole proof of gratitude we have to give;
 And since you deign to ask, O courteous fair,
 The motive of our unremitting care;
 Know then, 'tis *Happiness* we would obtain,
 That fairest prize our fondest wish would gain;
 By Fancy's mimic pencil oft portray'd,
 Still have we woo'd the visionary maid,
 The lovely phantom mocks our eager eyes,
 And still we chase and still we miss the prize.

CLEORA.

Long have we searched throughout this bounteous isle
 With constant ardour and with ceaseless toil;
 The various ways of various life we've try'd;
 But Peace, sweet Peace, hath ever been deny'd.
 We've sought in vain through ev'ry different state,
 The rich, the poor, the lowly, and the great:
 Doth she with Kings in palaces reside,
 Or dwell obscurely, far from pomp and pride?
 To learn this truth, we've bid a long adieu
 To all the shadows blinded men pursue.
 —We seek *Urania*, her whose virtues fire
 Our virgin hearts to *be* what we *admire*.
 Fair fame hath blazon'd her accomplish'd mind
 The lovely mansion of the graces join'd;
 For though with care she shuns the public eye,
 Yet worth like her's unknown can never lie.

LAURINDA.

On such a fair and faultless model form'd,
 By prudence guided, and by virtue warm'd,

Perhaps, Florella can direct our youth,
And point our footsteps to the paths of Truth ?

FLORELLA.

Ill would it suit my unexperienc'd age
In such important questions to engage,
Young as I am, unskilful to discern,
Nor fit to teach, who yet have much to learn ;
But would you with maturer years advise,
And reap the counsel of the truly wise,
The Dame you seek inhabits yonder cell,
In *her* united **worth** and wisdom dwell.
Poor, not dejected ; humble, yet not mean ;
Cheerful, though grave ; and lively, though serene ;
Benevolent, kind, pious, gentle, just,
Reason her guide, and Providence her trust ;
If Heav'n, indulgent to her little store,
Adds to that little, but a little more,
With pious praise her grateful heart o'erflows,
And sweetly mitigates the sufferer's woes.
Her labours for devotion best prepare,
And meek devotion smooths the brow of care.

Two lovely daughters make her little state,
The dearest blessings of propitious fate.
Under her kind protecting wing I live :
She gives to all—for she hath much to give,
Since Heav'n hath bless'd her with an ample *heart*,
That wisdom's noblest treasures can impart ;
But, just in all its dispensations, join'd
A narrow fortune to a noble mind.

PASTORELLA.

Her bright perfections charm my list'ning ear !
Elate with hope, we come to seek her here :
Then lead, Florella, to that humble shed,
Where Peace resides, from courts and cities fled.

A SONG.

O Happiness, celestial fair,
Our earliest hope, our latest care,
O hear our fond request :

Vouchsafe, reluctant Nymph, to tell
 On what sweet spot thou lov'st to dwell,
 And make us truly blest.

Amidst the walks of public life,
 The toils of wealth, ambition's strife,
 We long have fought in vain ;
 The crowded city's noisy din,
 And all the busy haunts of men,
 Afford but care and pain.

Pleas'd with the soft, the soothing pow'r
 Of calm reflection's silent hour,
 Sequester'd dost thou dwell ?
 Where care and tumult ne'er intrude,
 Dost thou reside with Solitude ?
 Thy humble votaries tell.

O Happiness, celestial fair,
 Our earliest hope, our latest care,
 Let us not sue in vain ;
 O deign to hear our fond request,
 Come, take possession of our breast,
 And there for ever reign.

(They retire.)

SCENE, THE GROVE.

URANIA, SYLVIA, ELIZA.

A SONG, BY SYLVIA.

SWEET SOLITUDE, thou placid Queen,
 Of modest air, and brow serene,
 'Tis thou inspir'st the Sage's themes,
 The Poet's visionary dreams.

Parent of Virtue, nurse of Thought,
 By thee were Saints and Patriarchs taught,
 Wisdom from thee her treasures drew,
 And in thy lap fair Science grew.

Whate'er exalts, refines and charms,
 Invites to thought, to virtue warms,

Whate'er is perfect, fair and good,
We owe to thee, sweet Solitude.

In these blest shades thou dost maintain
Thy peaceful, unmolested reign ;
No turbulent desires intrude
On thy repose, sweet Solitude.

With thee the charm of life shall last,
E'en when its rosy bloom is past,
And when slow-pacing Time shall spread
Its silver blossoms o'er my head.

No more with this vain world perplex'd,
Thou shalt prepare me for the next ;
The springs of life shall gently cease,
And Angels point the way to peace.

U R A N I A.

Ye tender objects of maternal love,
Ye dearest joys Urania e'er can prove ;
Behold another cheerful morn arise !
Behold the Sun all-glorious mount the skies !
Say, can you see this animating sight,
Without a fervent, pious, calm delight ?
Does not that Sun, whose all-prolific ray
Inspires each object to be light and gay ;
Does not that vivid pow'r teach ev'ry mind,
To be as warm, benevolent and kind,
To burn with unremitted ardour still,
Like *him* to execute their Maker's will ?
Then, let us, Power Supreme ! thy will adore,
Invoke thy mercies, and proclaim thy power ;
Shalt thou these benefits *in vain* bestow ?
Shall we forget the Source from whence they flow ?
Teach us through these to lift our hearts to Thee,
And in the gift the bounteous Giver see ;
To view Thee, as thou art, all good and wise,
Nor let thy blessings hide Thee from our eyes ;
From all obstructions clear our mental sight,
Pour on our souls thy beatific light ;
Teach us thy wondrous goodness to revere,
With love to worship, and with rev'rence fear ;

In the *mild* works of thy *benignant* hand,
 As in the *thunder* of thy dread command ;
 In common objects we neglect thy pow'r,
 Nor heed a miracle in ev'ry flow'r ;
 Yet neither hurricanes, nor storms proclaim
 In *louder* language, thy Almighty Name.
 Tell me, my first, my last, my darling care,
 If you this morn have rais'd your hearts in pray'r ?
 Say, did you rise from the sweet bed of rest,
 Your GOD unprais'd, his holy name unblest'd ?

SYLVIA.

Our minds, with gratitude and rev'rence fraught,
 By those pure precepts you have ever taught,
 By your example more than precepts strong,
 Of pray'r and praise have tun'd our matin song.

ELIZA.

And now, once more, with usual joy, attend,
 The counsels of our fond, maternal friend.

Enter FLORELLA, *with* EUPHELIA, CLEORA,
 PASTORELLA, LAURINDA.

FLORELLA, (*Aside to the Ladies.*)

See how the goodly dame, with pious art,
 Makes every thing a lesson to the heart !
 Observe the duteous list'ners, how they stand !
 Improvement and delight go hand in hand.

URANIA.

But where's Florella ?

FLORELLA.

Here's the happy she,
 Whom Heav'n most favour'd when it gave her thee.

URANIA.

But who are these in whose attractive mien,
 So sweetly blended every grace is seen ?
 Speak, my Florella, say the cause why here
 These beauteous damsels on our plains appear ?

FLORELLA.

Invited hither by Urania's fame,
 To seek her friendship, to these shades they came.
 Straying alone at morning's earliest dawn,
 I met them wandering on the verdant lawn ;
 Their courteous manners soon engaged my love,
 I've brought them here your sage advice to prove.

URANIA.

Tell me, ye gentle nymhs, the reason tell,
 Which brings such guests to grace my lonely cell ;
 Ask what we have to give—it is not ours,
 Heaven has but lent it us to make it yours.

CLEORA.

Your counsel, your advice is all we ask,
 And for Urania that's no irksome task.
 'Tis HAPPINESS we seek ; O deign to tell
 Where the coy fugitive delights to dwell ?

URANIA.

Ah, rather say, where you have sought this guest,
 This lovely inmate of the virtuous breast ?
 Declare the various methods you've essay'd,
 To court, and win the bright celestial maid.
 But first, though harsh the task, each beauteous fair
 Her ruling passion must with truth declare.

EUPHELIA.

Bred in the regal splendors of a court,
 Where pleasures, dress'd in every shape, resort ;
 I try'd the power of pomp and costly glare,
 Nor e'er found room for thought, or time for pray'r ;
 In different follies every hour I spent,
 Without reflection whence could rise content ?
 My hours were shar'd betwixt the Park and Play,
 And music serv'd to wait the tedious day ;
 Yet sweet airs no more with joy I heard,
 Such as some sweeter warbler was prefer'd ;
 The dance succeeded, and succeeding tir'd,
 If some more graceful dancer was admir'd ;

No sounds but flattery ever sooth'd my ear,
 Ungentle truths I knew not how to bear ;
 In drawing-rooms my dull, pale vigils spent,
 With ardour fought, but found not *there* content ;
 The syren mock'd me with delusive charms,
 I grasp'd—the shadow fled my eager arms.
 The scorpion Envy goaded still my breast,
 Some newer beauty robb'd my soul of rest.
 Or if my elegance of form prevail'd,
 And haply her inferior graces fail'd,
 Yet still some cause of wretchedness I found,
 Some barbed shaft my shatter'd peace to wound :
 Perhaps her gay attire exceeded mine—
 When she was *finer* how could I be *fine* ?

SYLVIA.

Pardon my interruption, beauteous maid !
 Can truth have prompted what you just have said ?
 Do you believe it possible, that *dress*
 Can lessen, or advance your Happiness ;
 Or that your robes, though splendid, rich and fine,
 Possess intrinsic value more than mine ?

URANIA.

So close our nature is to vice ally'd,
 Our very comforts are the source of pride ;
 Too much we move by *Custom's* slavish rule,
 Too often *Fashion* constitutes the fool.

CLEORA.

Of Happiness unfound I too complain,
 Sought in a different path, but sought in vain :
 I sigh'd for *fame*, I languish'd for renown,
 I would be prais'd, caress'd, admir'd, and known.
 On daring wing my mounting spirit soar'd,
 And science through her boundless fields explor'd :
 I scorn'd the salique laws of pedant schools,
 Which chain our genius down by tasteless rules :
 I long'd to burst these female bonds, which held
 My sex in awe, (by thirst of fame impell'd)
 To boast each various faculty of mind,
 Thy graces, POPE ! with JOHNSON'S learning join'd :

Like SWIFT, with strongly pointed ridicule,
 To brand the villain, and abash the fool ;
 To judge with taste, with spirit to compose,
 Now mount in epic, now descend to prose ;
 Steal flow'rs from BURKE, at once *sublime* and *sweet*,
 From MASON numbers, and from COLMAN wit ;
 Thy talents, MELMOTH ; HUME, thy polish'd page ;
 All HAMMOND's softness, and all DRYDEN's rage ;
 I pin'd for passion, sentiment and style,
 To weep with OTWAY, and with GOLDSMITH smile :
 With poignant STERNE to laugh the hours away,
 Or court the muse of elegy with GRAY ;
 With LANGHORNE, fancy's fairy fields to range,
 And charm, like LANGHORNE, howsoe'er I change.

URANIA.

Who aims at *every* science soon will find
 The field how vast, how limited the mind !

CLEORA.

Abstruser studies soon my fancy caught,
 The poet in th' astronomer forgot ;
 The schoolmen's systems now my mind employ'd,
 Their crystal Spheres, their Atoms, and their Void :
 NEWTON, and HALLEY all my soul inspir'd,
 And numbers less than *calculations* fir'd ;
 DESCARTS, and EUCLID shar'd my varying breast,
 And plans and problems all my soul possess'd :
 Less pleas'd to sing inspiring Phœbus' ray,
 Than mark the flaming comet's devious way :
 The pale moon dancing on the silver stream,
 And the mild lustre of her trembling beam,
 No more could charm my philosophic pride,
 Which sought her influence on the flowing tide :
 No more *ideal* beauties fir'd my thought,
 Which only *facts* and *demonstrations* sought ;
 " Let common eyes, I said, with transport view,
 " The earth's bright verdure, or the Heav'n's soft blue,
 " False is the pleasure, the delight is vain,
 " Colours exist but in the *vulgar* brain."
 I now with LOCKE trod *metaphysic* soil,
 Now chas'd coy nature through the tracts of BOYLE ;
 Sigh'd for their fame, but fear'd to share their toil. }

The laurel wreath, in fond idea twin'd,
To grace my learned temples I design'd.

These were my notions, these my constant themes,
My daily longings, and my nightly dreams ;
The thirst of fame my bosom robb'd of rest,
Too small the mansion for so great a guest.

PASTORELLA.

To me, no joys could pomp, or fame impart,
Far softer thoughts possess'd my virgin heart.
No prudent parent form'd my ductile youth,
Nor pointed out the lovely paths of truth.
Left to myself to cultivate my mind,
Pernicious novels their soft entrance find :
Their pois'nous influence led my mind astray,
I sigh'd for something, what, I could not say ;
I fancy'd virtues, which were never seen,
And dy'd for heroes, who have never been ;
I sicken'd with disgust at sober sense,
And loath'd the pleasures, worth and truth dispense ;
Contemn'd the manners of the world I saw,
My guide was fiction, and romance my law.
Strange images my wand'ring fancy fill,
Each wind a zephyr, and each brook a rill ;
I found adventures in each common tale,
And talk'd and sigh'd to every passing gale ;
Convers'd with echoes, woods, and shades, and bow'rs,
Cascades, and grottos, fields, and streams, and flow'rs.

ELIZA, (*to URANIA.*)

Preserve me from the errors of deceit,
And all the dangers wealth and beauty meet !

PASTORELLA.

Reason perverted, Fancy on her throne,
My soul to all my sex's softness prone,
I neither spoke, nor look'd as mortal ought,
By sense abandon'd, and by folly taught ;
A victim to imagination's sway,
Which stole my health, and rest, and peace away.
Professions, void of meaning, I receiv'd,
And still I found them false ; and still believ'd :

Imagin'd all who courted me, approv'd,
 Who prais'd, esteem'd me, and who flatter'd, lov'd.
 Fondly I hop'd (now vain those hopes appear,)
 Each man was faithful and each maid sincere.
 Still, disappointment mock'd the lingering day ;
 Still, new-born wishes led my soul astray.

When in the rolling year no joy I find,
 I trust the *next*, the *next* will sure be kind ;
 'The *next* fallacious as the *last* appears,
 And sends me on to still *remoter* years ;
 They come—they promise, but forget to give ;
 I *live* not, but I still *intend* to live.

At length, deceiv'd in all my schemes of bliss,
 I join'd these *three* in search of Happiness.

ELIZA.

Is this the world of which we want a fight ?
 Are these the beings who are call'd polite ?

SYLVIA.

If so, O gracious Heav'n ! hear SYLVIA's prayer !
 Preserve me still in humble virtue here !
 Far from such baneful pleasures may I live ;
 And keep, O keep me from the taint they give !

LAURINDA.

Till now, I've slept on life's tumultuous tide,
 No principle of action for my guide :
 From *ignorance* my chief misfortunes flow ;
 I never wish'd to learn, or car'd to know.
 With ev'ry folly slow-pac'd time beguil'd,
 In size a woman, but in soul a child,
 In slothful ease my moments crept away,
 And busy trifles fill'd the tedious day ;
 I liv'd extempore, as fancy fir'd,
 As chance directed, or caprice inspir'd.
 Too indolent to think, too weak to choose,
 Too soft to blame, too gentle to refuse,
 I took my colouring from the world around ;
 'The figures they ; my mind the simple ground.

Fashion with monstrous forms the canvas stain'd,
 Till nothing of my genuine self remain'd.
 My pliant soul from chance receiv'd its bent,
 And neither good perform'd, or evil meant :
 From right to wrong, from *vice* to virtue throw'n,
 No character possessing of its own.

Though more to folly than to vice inclin'd,
 A drear vacuity possess'd my mind.
 Too old to be with infant sports amus'd ;
 Unfit for converse, and to books unus'd ;
 The wise avoided me ; they could not hear
 My senseless prattle with a patient ear.

Disgusted, restless, every plan amiss,
 I come with these in search of Happiness.

CLEORA.

We, thus united by one common fate,
 Resolv'd on virtue, if not yet too late,
 Have form'd a friendship, which through life shall last,
 And vows, and choice, and love have bound it fast.
 Each left her title and exchang'd her name,
 More anxious now for Virtue than for Fame.

URANIA.

Your candour, beauteous damsels, I approve,
 Your foibles pity, and your merits love.

How few, O sacred Virtue ! can acquire
 That heart-felt transport thy pure flames inspire !
 But ere I say the methods you must try,
 To gain the glorious prize for which you sigh,
 Your fainting strength and spirits must be cheer'd
 With a plain meal, by temperance prepar'd.

FLORELLA.

No luxury our humble board attends,
 But love and concord are its smiling friends.

A SONG, BY FLORELLA.

HAIL, artless Simplicity ! beautiful maid,
 In the genuine attractions of nature array'd !

Let the rich and the proud, and the gay and the vain,
Still laugh at the graces that move in thy train.

No charm in thy modest allurements they find ;
The pleasures they follow, a sting leave behind :
Can criminal passion enrapture the breast
Like Virtue, with peace and serenity blest ?

O would you Simplicity's precepts attend,
Like us with delight at her altar you'd bend ;
The pleasures she yields would with joy be embrac'd,
You'd practise from virtue, and love them from taste.

The linnet enchants us the bushes among ;
Though cheap the musician, yet sweet is the song :
We catch the soft warbling in air as it floats,
And with ecstacy hang on the ravishing notes.

Our water is drawn from the clearest of springs,
And our food nor disease nor satiety brings :
Our mornings are cheerful, our labours are blest,
Our ev'nings are pleasant, our nights crown'd with rest.

From our culture yon garden its ornament finds,
And we catch at the hint for improving our minds :
To live to some purpose we constantly try,
And we mark by our actions the days as they fly.

Since such are the joys that *Simplicity* yields,
We may well be content with our woods and our fields :
How useless to us then, ye great, were your wealth,
When without it, we purchase both pleasure and health !
(*They retire into the Cottage.*)

SCENE, THE GROVE.

FLORELLA, EUPHELIA, CLEORA,
LAURINDA, PASTORELLA.

A SONG, BY FLORELLA.

WHILE Beauty and Pleasure are now in their prime,
And Folly and Fashion expect our whole time,
Ah ! let not those phantoms our wishes engage,
Let us live so in youth that we blush not in age.

Though the vain and the gay may attend us a while,
 Yet let not their flattery our prudence beguile ;
 Let us covet those charms that will never decay,
 Nor listen to all that deceivers can say.

“ How the tints of the rose, and the jess’mine’s perfume,
 “ The eglantine’s fragrance, the lilac’s gay bloom,
 “ Though fair and though fragrant, unheeded may lie,
 “ For that neither is sweet when FLORELLA is by.”

I sigh not for beauty, nor languish for wealth,
 But grant me, kind Providence, Virtue and Health ;
 Then, richer than Queens, and as happy as they,
 My days shall pass sweetly and swiftly away.

When age shall steal on me, and youth is no more,
 And the moralist Time shakes his glass at my door,
 What charm in lost beauty or wealth should I find ?
 My treasure, my wealth, is a sweet peace of mind.

That peace I’ll preserve then, as pure as ’twas giv’n,
 And taste in my bosom an earnest of Heav’n ;
 For Virtue and Wisdom can warm the cold scene,
 And sixty may flourish as gay as sixteen.

And when long I the burthen of life shall have borne,
 And Death with his sickle shall cut the ripe corn,
 Resign’d to my fate, without murmur or sigh,
 I’ll bless the kind summons, and lie down and die.

EUPHELIA.

Thus sweetly pass the hours of rural ease !
 Where life is bliss, and pleasures truly please !

PASTORELLA.

With joy we view the dangers we have past,
 Assur’d we’ve found *Felicity* at last.

FLORELLA.

Expect not *perfect Happiness* below,
 Nor heav’nly plants on earth’s low soil to grow.
 Esteem none happy by their outward air ;
 All have their portion of allotted care ;
 Though prudence wears the semblance of content,
 When the full heart with agony is rent ;

Secludes its anguish from the public sight,
 And feeds on sorrow with a sad delight ;
 Shuns every eye to cherish darling grief,
 This fond indulgence its supreme relief.
 By love directed, and in mercy meant,
 Are trials suffer'd, and afflictions sent ;
 To stem impetuous passion's furious tide,
 To curb the insolence of prosp'rous pride,
 To wean from earth, and bid our wishes soar
 To that blest clime where pain shall be no more,
 Where wearied virtue shall for refuge fly,
 And ev'ry tear be wip'd from ev'ry eye.

C L E O R A.

Lis't'ning to you, my heart can never cease
 To rev'rence Virtue, and to sigh for Peace.

F L O R E L L A.

Know, e'en URANIA, that accomplish'd Fair,
 Whose goodness makes her Heav'n's peculiar care,
 Full oft, ere she her present peace attain'd,
 The bitter cup of wo hath deeply drain'd,
 With streaming eyes hath mourn'd a husband dead,
 With feeble hands hath earn'd her children bread ;
 In affluence born, and bred in splendid state,
 Hath felt the cruelest extreme of fate :
 Yet meek, resign'd, and patient in distress,
 She knew the hand that wounds, hath pow'r to bless :
 Instead of murmuring at his sacred will,
 Grateful she bow'd for what was left her still.
 He, who our frail mortality did bear,
 Though free from *sin*, was not exempt from *care* ;
 Taught by his precepts, by his practice taught,
 Her will submitted, and resign'd her thought,
 Through faith she look'd beyond these earthly scenes,
 To where no pain nor sorrow intervenes.

Enter URANIA, SYLVIA, ELIZA.

URANIA.

Since, gentle Nymphs, my friendship to obtain,
 You've sought this peaceful, this sequester'd plain,

My honest counsel with attention hear,
 Though plain, well-meant ; imperfect, yet sincere ;
 What from maturer years alone I've known,
 What time has taught me, and experience shown :
 No polish'd phrase my artless speech will grace,
 But unaffected candour fill its place :
 My lips shall flattery's smooth deceit refuse ;
 And truth be all the eloquence I'll use.
 Know then, that life's chief happiness and wo,
 From good or evil *Education* flow ;
 And hence our future dispositions rise,
 The vice we practise, or the good we prize.
 When pliant nature any form receives,
 That precept teaches, or example gives,
 The yielding mind with virtue should be grac'd,
 For first impressions seldom are effac'd.
 If ignorance then her iron sway maintain,
 If prejudice preside, or passion reign,
 The erring principle is rooted fast,
 And fix'd the temper that through life may last.

PASTORELLA.

With heart-felt penitence we now deplore
 Those squander'd hours, that time can ne'er restore.

URANIA.

EUPHELIA sighs for *flattery, dress, and show*,
 Too common sources these of *female* wo !
 In *Beauty's* sphere pre-eminence to find,
 She slights the culture of th' immortal *mind*.
 I would not rail at beauty's charming pow'r,
 I would but have her aim at something more :
 Beauty with reason needs not quite dispense,
 And coral lips may sure speak common sense :
 Beauty makes virtue lovelier still appear ;
 Virtue makes beauty more divinely fair !
 Confirms its conquest o'er the willing mind,
 And those your beauties gain, your virtues bind.
 Yet, would ambition's fire your bosom fill,
 Its flame repress not—be ambitious still ;
 Let nobler views your best attention claim,
 The object chang'd, the passion be the same :

Indulge the true ambition to excel
In that best art, the art of living well.

EUPHELIA.

Unhappy those to bliss who seek the way,
In power superior, or in splendor gay !
Inform'd by thee, no more vain man shall find
The charm of flattery taint EUPHELIA's mind :
By thee instructed, still my views shall rise,
Nor stop at any mark beneath the skies.

URANIA.

In fair LAURINDA's uninstructed mind,
The want of culture, not of sense, we find :
Be Wisdom therefore your peculiar care,
Nor waste the precious hours in vain despair ;
Associate with the good, attend the sage,
And meckly listen to experienc'd age.
What, if acquirements you have fail'd to gain,
Such as the wise may want, the bad attain,
Know, that *Religion's* sacred treasures lie
Inviting, open, plain to ev'ry eye,
For ev'ry age, for ev'ry genius fit,
Nor limited to Science, or to Wit ;
To elevated talents not confin'd,
But all may learn the truths for all design'd ;
She calls, solicits, courts you to be blest,
And points to mansions of eternal rest.

And when advanc'd in years, matur'd in sense,
Think not with farther care you may dispense ;
'Tis fatal to the interest of the soul
To stop the race before we've reach'd the goal,
For nought our higher progress can preclude
So much as thinking we're already good :
Then place the standard of fair Virtue high,
Pursue, and grasp it e'en beyond the sky.

LAURINDA.

O that important time could back return
Those mispent hours, whose loss I deeply mourn !
Accept, just Heav'n, my penitence sincere,
My heart-felt anguish, and my fervent pray'r.

URANIA.

I pity PASTORELLA's hapless fate,
 By nature gentle, generous, mild, yet great :
 One false propension all her powers confin'd,
 And chain'd her finer faculties of mind ;
 Yet ev'ry virtue might have flourish'd there,
 With early culture, and *maternal* care.

If *Good* we plant not, *Vice* will fill the mind,
 And weeds despoil the space for flowers design'd.
 The human heart ne'er knows a state of rest ;
 Bad tends to worse, and better leads to best :
 We either gain or lose, we sink or rise,
 Nor rests our struggling nature till she dies.
 Those very passions that our peace invade,
 If rightly pointed, blessings may be made :
 Then rise, my friend, above terrestrial aims,
 Direct the ardour, which your breast inflames,
 To that pure region of eternal joys,
 Where fear disturbs not, nor possession cloy ;
 Beyond what fancy forms of rosy bowers,
 Or blooming chaplets of unfading flowers ;
 Fairer than e'er imagination drew,
 Or poet's warmest visions ever knew :
 Press eager onward to those blissful plains,
 Where one unbounded Spring for ever reigns.

PASTORELLA.

I mourn the errors of my thoughtless youth,
 And long, with thee, to tread the paths of Truth.

URANIA.

Learning is all the fair CLEORA's aim ;
 She seeks the loftiest pinnacle of Fame :
 Would she the privilege of *Man* invade ?
 Science for *female* minds was never made.
Taste, elegance, and talents, may be ours,
 But *learning* suits not our less vig'rous powers :
 Learning but roughens, polish'd taste refines ;
 DACIER less lovely than SEVIGNE shines.
 Know, fair Aspirer, could you ever hope
 To speak like STONHOUSE, or to write like POPE,

To join like FERNEY's, or like HAGLEY's Sage,
 Th' Historic, Ethic, and Poetic page,
 With all the powers of Wit and Judgment fraught,
 The flow of style, and the sublime of thought ;
 Yet, if the milder graces of the mind,
 Graces peculiar to the *sex* design'd,
 Good-nature, patience, sweetness void of art ;
 If these embellish'd not your virgin heart,
 You might be *dazzling*, but not truly *bright*,
 A pompous glare, but not an useful light ;
 A *Meteor*, not a star you would appear ;
 For *Woman* shines but in her *proper* sphere.

Accomplishments by Heaven were first design'd
 Less to adorn, than to amend the mind :
 Each should contribute to the general end,
 And all to virtue, as their centre, tend.
 Th' acquirements, which our best esteem invite,
 Should not project, but soften, mix, unite ;
 In glaring light not strongly be display'd,
 But sweetly lost, and melted into shade.

CLEORA.

Confus'd with shame, to thy reproofs I bend,
 Thou best adviser, and thou truest friend !
 From thee I'll learn to judge and act aright,
Humility with *Knowledge* to unite ;
 'The *finish'd* character must *both* combine ;
 'The *perfect Woman* must in either shine.

URANIA.

FLORELLA shines adorn'd with every grace,
 Her heart all virtue, as all charms her face ;
 Above the wretched, and below the great,
 Kind Heaven has fix'd her in a middle state ;
 From rich, and poor, at equal distance thrown,
 The smile invidious, and the insulting frown ;
 The demon *Fashion* never warp'd her soul ;
 Her passions move at *Reason's* wise control ;
 Her eyes the movements of her heart declare,
 For what she dares to *be* she dares *appear*.
 Unleasur'd in dissimulation's school,
 'To smile by precept, and to blush by rule,

Reason in *her* to pure religion tends,
 Subservient only to the noblest ends :
 True piety's the magnet of her soul,
 Which upward points, immortal bliss the pole.

She smooths the path of my declining years,
 Augments my comforts, and divides my cares.

PASTORELLA.

O sacred friendship, O exalted state !
 The choicest bounty of indulgent fate !

URANIA.

Would you, ye fair, the bright example give,
 Fir'd with ambition, men like you would live,
 Would choose for merit, and esteem for sense,
 And taste the solid transports these dispense ;
 No longer would disdain the virtuous wife,
 Nor the dear blessings of domestic life ;
 But, shunning each delusive path of sin,
 All joy without, all sweet content within,
 Would rouse at Virtue's, and at Honour's voice,
 And *love* from *reason*, whom they *lik'd* from *choice* :
 Then marriage would with peace go hand in hand,
 And Concord's temple close to Hymen's stand.

How blest, would each to Reason's voice submit,
 Nor *Man* affect *control*, nor *Woman*, *wit*.
 Harmonious union must for ever cease,
 If once Contention breaks the band of peace :
 Abhor beginnings—always dread the worst ;
 Admit a doubt, and you're completely curst.
 Nor vice alone, e'en foibles may destroy
 Domestic peace, and taint the nuptial joy.

Let Woman, then, her *real* good discern,
 And her *true* interests of URANIA learn ;
 Her lowest name, the tyrant of an hour,
 And her best empire, negligence of power :
 By yielding, she obtains the noblest sway,
 And reigns securely, when she seems t' obey.

EUPHELIA.

With double grace she pleads Discretion's cause,
Who from her life her virtuous lesson draws.

URANIA.

As some fair violet, loveliest of the glade,
Sheds its mild fragrance on the lonely shade,
Withdraws its modest head from public sight,
Nor courts the Sun, nor seeks the glare of light,
Should some rude hand profanely dare intrude,
And bear its beauties from its native wood,
Expos'd, abroad its languid colours fly,
Its form decays, and all its odours die.
So *Woman*, born to dignify retreat,
Unknown to flourish, and unseen be great,
'To give domestic life its sweetest charm,
With softness polish, and with virtue warm,
Fearful of Fame, unwilling to be known,
Should seek but Heaven's applauses and her own ;
No censures dread, but those which crimes impart,
'The censures of a self-condemning heart ;
With angel kindness should behold distress,
And meekly pity where she can't redress :
Like beaming Mercy, wipe Affliction's tear,
But to *herself* not *Justice* so severe ;
Her passions all corrected, or subdu'd,
But one—the virtuous thirst of doing good ;
This great ambition still she calls her own,
This best ambition makes her breast its throne.

CLEORA.

Let's join to bless that Power, who brought us here,
Adore his goodness, and his will revere,
Assur'd, that *Peace* exists but in the *mind*,
And *Piety* alone that *Peace* can find.

URANIA.

In its true light this transient life regard,
A state of trial only, not reward ;
'Though rough the passage, peaceful is the port,
The bliss is perfect, the probation short.

Of human wit, beware the fatal pride,
 An useful Follower, but a dangerous Guide.
 On holy Faith's aspiring pinions rise,
 Assert your birthright, and assume the skies.

Fountain of Being, teach us to devote
 To thee each purpose, action, word, and thought;
 Thy grace our hope, thy love our only boast,
 Be all distinctions in the *Christian* lost;
 Be this, in ev'ry state our wish alone,
Almighty, wise, and good, Thy Will be done.

ODE TO CHARITY.

O CHARITY, divinely wise,
 Thou meek-ey'd Daughter of the skies!
 From the pure fountain of eternal light,
 Where fair, immutable, and ever bright,
 The Beatific Vision shines,
 And Angel with Archangel joins
 In choral songs to sing his praise,
 PARENT OF LIFE, ANCIENT OF DAYS,
 Who *was* ere Time existed, and *shall* be
 Through the wide round of vast Eternity.
 O come, thy warm benevolence impart,
 Enlarge my feelings, and expand my heart!

O THOU, enthron'd in realms above,
 Bright effluence of that boundless love
 Whence joy and peace in streams un sullied flow,
 Oh! deign to make thy lov'd abode below:
 Though sweeter strains adorn'd my tongue,
 Than Saint conceiv'd, or Seraph sung,
 And though my glowing fancy caught
 Whatever Art, or Nature taught,
 Yet, if this hard unfeeling heart of mine
 Ne'er felt thy force, O Charity divine!
 An empty shadow Science would be found,
 My knowledge ignorance, my wit a sound.

Though my prophetic spirit knew
 To bring futurity to view,

Without thy aid e'en this would nought avail,
For Tongues shall cease, and Prophecies shall fail.

Come then, thou sweet celestial guest,
Shed thy soft influence o'er my breast,
Bring with thee Faith, divinely bright,
And Hope, fair harbinger of light,
To clear each mist with their pervading ray,
To fit my soul for Heav'n, and point the way
Where Perfect Happiness her sway maintains,
For there the God of Peace for ever, ever reigns.

EPILOGUE,

SPOKEN BY TWO YOUNG LADIES.

Enter FIRST LADY.

LADIES! to night our unexperienc'd train
Your favour courted : Did we court in vain?
Like *Hamlet's* Ghost just rising from the dead,
"With all our imperfections on our head,"
Unlectur'd in the deep theatric art,
To rouse the feelings of the pitying heart,
Unus'd to acting, and untaught to feign
The fancied pleasure and the mimic pain,
You'll wonder how we ventur'd into view,
And to say truth—I wonder at it too;
Yet think not fill'd with insolence we come;
Conscious demerit still would keep us dumb.——

Enter SECOND LADY.

Child! we must quit these visionary scenes,
And end our follies when we end our teens;
These bagatelles we must relinquish now,
And good *matronic Gentlewomen* grow:
Fancy no more on airy wings shall rise,
We now must scold the maids, and make the pies:
Verse is a folly—we must get above it,
And yet, I know not how it is—I love it.
'Though, should we still the rhyming trade pursue,
The men will shun us—and the women too:
'The men, poor souls! of scholars are afraid,
We should not, did they govern, learn to read;
At least, in no abstruser volume look,
Than the learn'd records——of a *Cookery Book*.
The ladies too, their well-meant censure give,
"What!—does she write? A flattern, as I live.—"
"I wish she'd leave her books and mend her cloaths;
"I thank my stars I know not verse from prose:

"How well see'er these learned ladies write,
 "They seldom act the virtues they recite;
 "No useful qualities adorn their lives;
 "They make sad Mothers, and still sadder Wives."

FIRST LADY.

I grant this satire just, in former days,
 When *Sappho* and *Corinna* tun'd their lays:
 But in our chaster times 'tis no offence,
 When female virtue joins with female sense;
 When moral *Carter* breathes the strain divine,
 And *Aikin*'s life flows faultless, as her line;
 When all accomplish'd *Montagu* can spread
 Fresh-gather'd laurels round her *Shakespeare*'s head;
 When wit, and worth in polish'd *Brookes* unite,
 And fair *Macaulay* claims a *Livy*'s right.

Thus far, to clear her from the sin of rhyme,
 Our author bade me trespass on your time,
 To show, that if she dares aspire to letters,
 She only sins in common with her betters:
 She bids me add--though Learning's cause I plead,
 One virtuous sentiment, one generous deed,
 Affords more genuine transport to the heart,
 Than genius, wit, or science can impart;
 For these shall flourish, fearless of decay,
 When wit shall fail, and science fade away.

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